



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Request for
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments
and
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority
for
Organization XYZ**

- I. Introduction**
- II. Background**
- III. Reshaping the Workforce**
- IV. Budget Neutrality/Costs/Savings**
- V. Template for Combined VSIP/VERA Request**

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Current Organization Chart

Attachment 2 – New Organization Chart

**Attachment 3 – Targeted Positions and Maximum Number of VSIPs/VERAs to be
Offered to Targeted Positions by Office and Series**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office XYZ,
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments
and
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority**

I. Introduction

In accordance with Section 1313(b) of the Chief Human Capital Officer's Act of 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is requesting approval authority through XX/XX/XX for the use of Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP/Buy-Out) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA/Early-Out). Organization XYZ will use these authorities to:

Both the VSIP and VERA opportunities will be offered to staff in targeted series in the XX components of Organization XYZ. As noted in section III, targeting decisions were made by senior managers based on the specific mission needs required to reshape their offices. This proposal sets a maximum number of VSIP/VERAs to be offered for each series in each office. Decisions on who receives VSIPs will be made on the basis of _____.

II. Background

III. Reshaping the Workforce

IV. Budget Neutrality/Costs/Savings

Budget Neutrality

This request for VSIP and VERA, if approved, will be conducted so that no funds or resources other than those appropriated for use in Fiscal Year (FY) XXXX will be used or required.

As mandated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for early-out/buy-out requests, Organization XYZ's request certifies that the early-out/buy-out will be budget neutral. That is, the early-out/buy-out authority will not result in any increased costs above current or future FY appropriations to pay for costs incurred for buy-out cash payments, annual leave cash payouts, or any other costs, including those associated with refilling the resulting vacancies.

Direct Costs

Estimated Savings

Indirect Costs

V. Combined Request for Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Agency:

Covered Component(s):

VSIP and VERA

1. Explain the workforce situation the organization needs to address through VSIP and VERA that would otherwise require involuntary personnel actions, e.g., delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping.

2. Identify the end date for separations under VSIP and VERA.

Provide the end date for the authorities as well as the final date for employees to separate from the agency's employment roles.

Required information for VSIP request

3. Identify the specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position, such as skills and knowledge gaps.

4. Describe the categories of employees who will be offered VSIP by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position such as skills or knowledge gaps, or retirement eligibility.

This should be a description of all groups of employees who will receive VSIP offers. The agency should use categories such as position titles, occupational series, grade levels or function(s) performed (e.g., maintenance workers, support staff, etc.). The request should also specify the geographic area(s) where the employees are located.

5. Identify the number of VSIPs to be paid and the maximum amount of each VSIP (up to \$25,000).

6. Describe how the organization will operate without the eliminated positions and functions identified in number 1.

7. Provide a proposed organization chart showing the expected changes to the organization's structure after completing the VSIP plan.

This chart should show the agency (or component within the agency, if the VSIP request is for a single component) minus the eliminated or restructured or redescribed positions (different grade, title, function(s), etc.). In order to effectively show the meaning of this information, it would be useful to display a current organization chart as well.

8. If requesting, or will request, VERA, describe how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

This discussion should explain the extent to which the agency believes it will reach its voluntary separation goals by combining VERA with VSIP as an enticement for voluntary separation. If the agency believes the VERA, when used with VSIP may entice certain employees to retire early to receive

a VSIP, it should provide that information and explain the anticipated, positive effect that VERA will have on the VSIP acceptance rate.

9. If offering VSIPs under another statutory authority, describe how VSIPs are being used under that authority.

Not applicable.

Required information for VERA request

10. Provide the anticipated effective date of the substantial delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping described in number 1.

(Note: The date provided should not be earlier than the ending date provided in number 2)

11. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s).

12. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the reason(s) in number 1.

For example, if you are requesting VERA based on a need to reshape your workforce to correct skills imbalances, you will likely experience voluntary separations, reassignments, and reclassifications. The sum of these anticipated actions is the number we're seeking.

13. Provide the total number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are eligible for voluntary early retirement. (Do not include employees eligible for optional retirement.)

14. Provide an estimate of the number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to take voluntary early retirement.

15. Describe the types of personnel actions anticipated as a result of the reason(s) in number 1 (e.g., reassignments, downgrades, separations) that would occur without VERA.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Current Organization Chart

Attachment 2 – New Organization Chart

**Attachment 3 – Targeted Positions and Maximum Number of VSIPs to be
Offered to Targeted Positions by Office and Series**

Aaship Office		Eligibility Series	
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	0301
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	0301
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	0318
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	0343
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	0343
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	1530
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	1530
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	2210
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	2210
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	1-VRE	2210
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0301
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0301
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0301
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0318
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0340
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0340
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0343
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0343
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0343
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0343
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	0401
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	1301
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	1320
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Information Analysis and Access	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0028
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0028
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0301
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0301
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0318
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0343
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0343
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	0343
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	2210
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	2210
OEI	Office of Information Collection	1-VRE	2210
OEI	Office of Information Collection	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Office of Information Collection	2-EOBO	0028

Title	Pay Plan	Grade	Employee
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	14	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
Information Management Specialist	GS	14	
Supv Information Management Specialist	GS	15	
Secretary (Typing)	GS	06	
Program Analyst	GS	13	
Program Analyst	GS	14	
Statistician (Health)	GS	14	
Statistician	GS	15	
IT Specialist (System Analysis)	GS	14	
IT Specialist (System Analysis)	GS	14	
IT Spec (INET)	GS	15	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	13	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	13	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	14	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	14	
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15	
Supv Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15	
Information Management Specialist	GS	13	
Information Management Specialist	GS	13	
Information Management Specialist	GS	15	
Secretary (Office Automation)	GS	09	
Director, Office of Information Analysis & Access	ES	00	
Deputy Director, Office of Information Analysis & Access	ES	00	
Program Analyst	GS	13	
Program Analyst	GS	13	
Program Analyst	GS	13	
Program Analyst	GS	13	
Biologist	GS	13	
Environmental Scientist	GS	14	
Chemist	GS	15	
IT Specialist (DataMgt)	GS	13	
IT Specialist (DTAMGMT)	GS	15	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15	
Supervisory Information Management Spec.	GS	15	
Lead Freedom Of Information Specialist--	GS	15	
Secretary (Oa)	GS	10	
Program Analyst	GS	12	
Program Analyst	GS	13	
Supervisory Program Analyst	GS	15	
IT Specialist (Data Mgt)	GS	14	
IT Specialist (PLCYPLN)	GS	15	
IT Specilialist (System Analysis)	GS	15	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	14	
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15	

[illegible]

Supv Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15
Freedom of Information Specialist	GS	13
Freedom of Information Specialist	GS	13
Information Management Specialist	GS	13
Freedom of Information Specialist	GS	13
Information Management Specialist	GS	13
Information Management Specialist	GS	14
Privacy Officer	GS	15
Dir/ Ofc. Of Information Collection	ES	00
Dep Dir/Ofc. Of Information Collection	ES	00
Management Analyst	GS	15
Program Analyst	GS	15
Supervisory Program Analyst	GS	15
Budget Analyst	GS	15
Management And Program Analyst	GS	14
Biologist	GS	15
IT Specialist (Security)	GS	15
Program Specialist	GS	12
Information Management Specialist	GS	12
Information Management Specialist	GS	15
Program Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	14
Supv Information Management Specialist	GS	15
Management Analyst	GS	13
Management and Program Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	14
Program Analyst	GS	14
Program Analyst	GS	15
Telecommunications Specialist	GS	15
IT Specialist (PLCYPLN)	GS	12
IT Specialist (Network/Sysadmin)	GS	13
Information Technology Specialist	GS	13
IT SPECIALIST(CUSTOMER SUPPORT/POLICY & PLANNING	GS	13
IT Specialist (CustSpt/DataMgt)	GS	13
IT Specialist (Security)	GS	13
IT Specialist (SYSADMIN)	GS	13
IT Specialist (NETWORK/CUSTSPT)	GS	14
IT Specialist (CUSTSPT)	GS	14
IT Specialist (NETWORK/CUSTSPT)	GS	14
IT Specialist (SYSADMIN/NETWORK)	GS	14
IT Specialist	GS	14
IT Specialist (NETWORK/CUSTSPT)	GS	14

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

A.

[illegible]

Information Technology Specialist	GS	15
IT Specialist (Security)	GS	15
IT Specialist	GS	15
Information Management Specialist	GS	13
Policy Analyst	GS	14
Supervisory Information Management Spec.	GS	15
Supervisory Information Management Spec.	GS	15
Management Analyst	GS	11
Program Analyst	GS	12
Management Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	13
Management Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	13
Program Analyst	GS	14
Program Analyst	GS	15
Program Analyst	GS	15
Program Analyst	GS	15
Accountant	GS	14
IT Specialist (INET/CUSTSPT)	GS	12
IT Specialist (PLCYPLN)	GS	12
Information Technology Specialist (InfoSec/Policy/Planning)	GS	13
IT SPECIALIST(CUSTOMER SUPPORT/POLICY & PLANNING	GS	13
IT Specialist	GS	13
IT Specialist (CustSpt/DataMgt)	GS	13
IT Specialist (CustSpt/DataMgt)	GS	13
IT Specialist (Security)	GS	13
IT Specialist (INET/CUSTSPT)	GS	13
IT Specialist (Network Service)	GS	13
IT Specialist (SYSADMIN)	GS	13
IT Specialist (PLCYPLN)	GS	13
IT Specialist (Policy & Planning)	GS	14
IT Spec (Network/InfoSec)	GS	14
IT Specialist	GS	14
IT Specialist (NETWORK/CUSTSPT)	GS	14
IT Specialist (SYSADMIN)	GS	14
IT Specialist	GS	14
IT Specialist	GS	14
IT Specialist (Data Management)	GS	14
IT Specialist (Network)	GS	14
IT Specialist (NETWORK/CUSTSPT)	GS	14
IT Specialist	GS	15
IT Specialist	GS	15

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Office of the Assistant Administrator	1-VRE	0343
OEI	Office of the Assistant Administrator	2-EOBO	0340
OEI	Office of the Assistant Administrator	2-EOBO	0340
OEI	Office of the Assistant Administrator	2-EOBO	0343
OEI	Office of the Assistant Administrator	2-EOBO	2210
OEI	Quality Staff	1-VRE	0028
OEI	Quality Staff	1-VRE	0301
OEI	Quality Staff	1-VRE	1529
OEI	Quality Staff	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Quality Staff	2-EOBO	0028
OEI	Quality Staff	2-EOBO	0028

IT Specialist	GS	15
Lead Information Technology Specialist	GS	15
IT Specialist (PLCYPLN)	GS	15
IT Specialist (PLCYPLN)	GS	15
Supv. IT Specialist	GS	15
IT Specialist	GS	15
Supervisory Information Technology Specialist	GS	15
Program Analyst	GS	15
Prin Deputy Asst Admin For Oei	ES	00
Director, Enterprise IT Systems	ES	00
Program Analyst	GS	15
Information Officer (Geospatial Tech)	SL	00
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15
Information Management Specialist	GS	13
Mathematical Statistician	GS	14
Supv Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS	15
Environmental Protection Specialist (Leader)	GS	15

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Program and Region Office	Leaders		Employees			Office Total
	SES	Manager / Supervisor	Permanent Employees	Temporary Employees	Total Employees	
OEI	8	30	353		353	391
Office of Information Analysis and Access	2	7	75		75	84
Office of Information Collection	2	8	65		65	75
Office of Planning, Resource, and Outreach		3	26		26	29
Office of Technology Operations and Planning	2	11	168		168	181
Office of the Assistant Administrator	2		8		8	10
Quality Staff		1	11		11	12

Manager / Supervisor to Permanent Employee Ratio	Leader to Permanenet Employee Ratio
1 : 11.8	1 : 9.3
1 : 10.7	1 : 8.3
1 : 8.1	1 : 6.5
1 : 8.7	1 : 8.7
1 : 15.3	1 : 12.9
	1 : 4
1 : 11	1 : 11

Leader to Total Employee Ratio	
	1 : 9.3
	1 : 8.3
	1 : 6.5
	1 : 8.7
	1 : 12.9
	1 : 4
	1 : 11

OEI

Occupation	Total Onboard as of 7/1/2012 WFP Template Submission	Projected WFP Reductions through 2016	Total Onboard as of 10/23/2013
OEI	407	-15	391
0028 - Environmental Protection Specialist	47	-2	41
0301 - Miscellaneous Administration and Program	47	-3	46
0318 - Secretary	6	-1	5
0343 - Management and Program Analysis	116	-4	105
0391 - Telecommunications	2	0	2
0399 - Administration and Office Support Student Trainee	3	-1	2
0401 - Natural and Biological Sciences	2	-1	2
0403 - Microbiology	1	-1	1
0408 - Ecology	1	-1	1
0415 - Toxicology	1	0	1
0501 - Financial Administration and Program		0	2
0510 - Accounting	4	0	4
0560 - Budget Analysis	2	0	2
0893 - Chemical Engineering	1	0	1
0905 - General Attorney	1	0	1
1101 - General Business and Industry		0	1
1301 - General Physical Science	2	0	1
1320 - Chemistry	1	0	1
1529 - Mathematical Statistics	1	0	1
1530 - Statistics	3	0	3
2210 - Information Technology Management	126	-1	129
2299 - Information Technology Student Trainee		0	1
Leader	40	0	39

Eligible for Regular Retirement as of 4/1/2014	VERA / VSIP Early Retirement Eligible as of 4/1/2014	Ineligible for Retirement as of 4/1/2014
63	99	229
Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy	28
		28
		2
		64
		1
		2
		1
		1
		1
		2
		3
		1
		1
		1
		1
Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy		1
		73
		1
4	17	18

	407	-15	391
Shaded rows indicate administrative/general occupations that are in decline agency wide based on People Plus Data as of 10/23/2013 Pulled 10/23/2013 Data excludes Pay Plans CC, ED, EF, EH, and EX			

63	99	229
on 2012-2013 workforce planning data.		



**The Office of Enforcement Compliance and Assurance (OECA)
Request for
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority
And
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments
For
Staff Assigned to Headquarters Offices in Washington, DC**

- I. Introduction**
- II. Background**
- III. Reshaping OECA Workforce and Meeting Lower FTE Ceilings**
- IV. Budget Neutrality**
- V. Performance Measures to Assess use of the VERA and VSIP Authority**
- VI. Template for VERA Request**
- VII. Template for VSIP Request**

Attachments

- 1. OECA Current Organizational Structure**
- 2. OECA Proposed Organizational Structure**
- 3. Targeted Positions for VERA/VSIP**
- 4. Methodology for VSIP and/or VERA Acceptance Process**

I. Introduction

In accordance with Section 1313(b) of the Chief Human Capital Officer's Act of 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Enforcement and Compliance (OECA) is requesting approval authority through **September 30, 2013** for the use of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA/Early-Out) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP/Buy-Out). OECA will use these authorities to:

- Lower the number of FTEs in OECA;
- Redirect or refocus resources within the enforcement and compliance programs in order to accelerate efforts to increase compliance with the nation's environmental law;
- Focus on obtaining new skills in order to accelerate its *Next Generation Compliance* approach (the increased use of new technologies and innovative compliance strategies that will yield more effective compliance with the nation's environmental laws);
- Reshape the workforce to reflect changes in programmatic direction; strengthen programmatic expertise with appropriate skill mix by reducing administrative support through efficiencies and by eliminating obsolete skills, and realigning full-time equivalents (FTE) across programs;
- Realign the organization's remaining FTEs across offices to take advantage of efficiencies by combining functions; and
- Preserve extramural funds necessary to meet the changing mission requirements for *Next Generation Compliance*.

Next Generation Compliance is a paradigm shift in the way OECA does enforcement and compliance. OECA intends to reduce pollution by improving compliance with EPA regulations in ways that are more effective and efficient, relying heavily on advances in information and monitoring technology. The sheer number of regulated facilities, the increasing contributions of large numbers of smaller sources to important environmental problems and federal and state budget constraints means we can no longer rely primarily on the traditional single facility inspection and enforcement approach to ensure compliance across the country. A key element of this approach is assisting states in modifying their programs to implement electronic reporting with their regulated facilities.

The *Next Generation Compliance (Next Gen) Investment* involves work in six areas:

- Monitoring and Targeting - to invest in equipment to monitor pollution and train federal and state inspectors to use it;
- Electronic-Reporting -to help states modify their programs to implement electronic reporting;
- IT Infrastructure - to modernize electronic reporting systems;
- Transparency - to identify new data sets that can be integrated with compliance and enforcement information that is visible to the public;
- New Approaches/Tools To Improve Compliance In Rules - to increase the "self-reporting" of rules by e-reporting, self-certification, third party reviews, issuance of technical guidance and public disclosure; and

- Innovative Enforcement Approaches - to respond to minor violations with automated "Notices of Violations," to conduct further research, and to develop and pilot innovative tools to expand and expedite administrative penalty orders.

In 2010, the Office of Compliance (OC), a component of OECA, offered early outs and buyouts to its personnel and was successful in reshaping its workforce, and meeting reduced FTE levels. OC was able to reshape its workforce due to a change in strategic direction, reduce administrative support and realign FTEs across the office. OECA wants to continue to build on that successful platform and use the VERA/VSIP authorities in the same manner that will allow OECA to become a more efficient organization, enabling the office to enlarge its enforcement capabilities through strategic use of newer technologies, consolidation of some administrative functions across nine offices and expanded outreach to the regulated communities and other stakeholders.

OECA will offer a combination of VERA and VSIP to staff in targeted GS/GM 5-15 graded positions and in the following specific job series: 0303 Miscellaneous Clerks, 0343 Management and Program Analysts, Administrative and Office support areas such as 0341, Administrative Officers, and 0318 Secretaries, 0028 Environmental Protection Specialists, 1001 Communication Specialists, 0301 Administrative Specialists, and 0905 attorneys in each of OECA's nine Headquarters offices. As noted in section III, the decision to reduce the number of positions in the specific job series listed above was made by senior managers based on the specific mission needs to implement *Next Generation Compliance*, to reshape the workforce, and to meet lower FTE ceilings.

In addition, the buyout and early retirement options will enable the organization to reduce obsolete skills in a number of job series such as 0303 miscellaneous clerk and assist (clerk typist) and to consolidate a broader range of functions under administrative titles such as 0301 Administrative Management Specialist, 0318 Secretary, and 0341 Administrative Officer. As technology use across the workforce has expanded, many of the activities of the administrative staff (e.g., typing, filing, screening calls, scheduling meetings, photocopying, mailing documents, time keeping, and making travel reservations) have been assumed by the office's professional and technical staff that perform these functions electronically at their desktop. This change in the work environment has diminished the need for positions in the administrative field.

Administrative support still required by OECA is vastly different in nature. Many of these activities can be performed as part of a broader array of duties of lower graded, junior staff, such as legal research, project tracking, software proficiency (report development and database management, coordination and liaison work, and sophisticated electronic formatting of documents).

Environmental Specialist, 0028 and 0343 Management and Program Specialist utilize similar knowledge and abilities such as analytical decision making and critical thinking, so enforcement and compliance work that require those types of skills can be shared to create more efficiency with the reduced number of positions in those job series. In addition, the need for a separate 1001

communication specialist is reduced as the organization expands its use of technology and social media to communicate enforcement and compliance information to the stake holders and public.

The need for 0905 Attorney positions can be reduced; since all attorneys have the same professional qualifications. With the exception of the attorney positions that deal with the majority of personnel issues and civil enforcement cases, the rest of the assigned attorney positions within OECA fall under the General Attorney category and, as such, are involved in rendering legal advice and services with respect to questions, regulations, practices, or other matters falling within the purview of a federal government agency regardless of function or subject matter area of work. Therefore, those attorneys can be reassigned to work in any of OECA's offices that will consolidate functional work assignments and lower the attorney position requirements with the implementation of *Next Generation Compliance* technologies. The decision as to who receives the VSIPs and VERAs will be made on the basis of the submission timeframe under the "first-in, first-out" concept with a maximum number of VSIP and VERA offers for each of the specific job series. The specific details are shown in Attachment 4.

During this same time period, OECA will need to acquire more professional skills such as 0819 Environmental, 0893 Chemical and 0830 Mechanical Engineers that are able to identify, analyze, advise, consult and report on the testing, and the effects of procedural changes and appraising the validity of results of the self-certification programs that are being developed under the new approaches/tools to improve compliance in rules. The need for more 1300 Physical Scientific skills is also growing, as the demand for *Next Gen* compliance grows. Third party reviews, continuous emissions monitoring and public disclosures will create the need for more testing of self-certification programs to increase our ability to detect violations that impact public health, reduce transaction costs, and better engage the public to drive behavioral changes in the regulated community.

The continued growing need for additional 2210 Information Management (IT) Specialist will manifest as Electronic Reporting, remote monitoring, and self-certification program requirements expand and federal and state budgets are constrained. As OECA obtains more complete, timely, and accurate information through electronic reporting we need to make it public, where it can be used to drive better environmental performance.

II. Background

Since 1970, EPA has pursued its mission to protect human health and the environment. EPA employs approximately 17,000 people across the country, which includes 13 program offices Headquartered in Washington, DC; 10 regional offices; and more than a dozen laboratories.

OECA is one of the 13 program offices located at EPA headquarters. It is comprised of nine offices: the Immediate Office (IO), the Federal Facilities Enforcement Office (FFEO), the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ); the Office of Compliance (OC); the Office of Civil Enforcement (OCE); the Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics and Training (OCEFT); the Office of Administration and Policy (OAP); the Office of Site Remediation Enforcement (OSRE); and

Office of Federal Activities (OFA). With an operating budget of \$ 231,000,000 for FY 2012 and a staff of approximately 856 assigned to headquarters, OECA is committed to implementing a strong enforcement and compliance program focused on identifying and reducing non-compliance and deterring future violations. To identify and address the most significant environmental issues/violations, OECA utilizes a variety of activities, including data collection and analysis, compliance monitoring, assistance and incentives, civil and criminal enforcement efforts and innovative problem-solving approaches. Over 50% of OECA's employees are Program Analysts, Environmental Protection Specialists, Attorneys, Information Technology Specialists, and Administrative Support Staff.

As OECA realigns resources to more efficiently and effectively meet its mission needs, FTE ceilings and workforce composition in its offices need to change. By realigning its workforce to address important public health and environmental compliance problems as well as top program priorities, allows OECA to invest in *Next Gen* modern monitoring technology to detect pollution problems, effectively monitor electronic reporting from facilities to obtain timely and accurate information, enhance transparency to advise the public of environmental performance and implement innovative enforcement approaches to drive compliance.

With the addition of more engineers, scientists, and IT specialists, OECA will be able to rely heavily on advances in information and monitoring technology. The sheer number of regulated facilities, the increasing contributions of large numbers of smaller sources to important environmental problems, and federal and state budget constraints, means we can no longer rely primarily on the traditional single facility inspection and enforcement approach to ensure compliance across the country. OECA's investment in these skills will increase our ability to detect violations that impact public health, maximize the number of inspections our resources can accommodate and make better data available on a real time basis for decision making.

Attachment 1 reflects the current office structure in OECA with 856 FTEs and Attachment 2 reflects the reduction in FTEs to 817 that is needed. Although there will be no changes in office structure, FTE ceilings reductions will need to be realigned to reflect workload priorities and shifts in mission-critical functions. VERA/VSIP authorities will be targeted to eight specific job series across all of the offices in OECA to assist in achieving sufficient flexibility. In concert with training opportunities, OECA will be positioned to successfully reshape its workforce as the Office of Compliance achieved in its 2010 early out/buyout.

III. Reshaping the OECA Workforce and Meeting Lower FTE Levels

Today, we rely almost exclusively on time-consuming and expensive pollution tests that make it hard to quickly find and investigate the worst air, waste, and water pollution, and for communities to know about pollution that affects them. It is increasingly difficult to ensure compliance using outdated tools and old approaches, as the universe of regulated pollution sources is outstripping the resources available to state and federal inspectors to find and correct non-compliance.

Increased media attention and quests for transparency, increased interaction with external stakeholders, new enhanced security requirements and improved proficiency working in a team environment, have also contributed to workforce challenges and changes. The work skills needed to meet the requirements of a changing OECA are different than those needed 15 or 25 years ago.

OECA needs to reshape its workforce to meet technical, administrative, and programmatic challenges facing the organization. The work of the office has changed significantly with the evolution of technology including information technology, more advanced monitoring equipment, and improved video/audio communications. The traditional approach of conducting individual inspections and enforcement to drive compliance is not feasible with the size of the regulated universe and limited government inspection resources.

While OECA has achieved impressive pollution control and health benefits through vigorous civil and criminal enforcement methods, traditional enforcement methods alone will not address all noncompliance problems. We already know about more violations than we can address. EPA cannot conduct enough compliance inspections to ensure that the health and environmental benefits of laws passed by Congress are realized. The ever growing number of regulated facilities, the increasing number of smaller sources contributing to environmental problems, and federal and state budget constraints, mean the EPA needs to innovate if it is to achieve gains in compliance over the long-term.

With better monitoring and targeting, the expansion of electronic reporting and enhanced transparency, we will be able to develop and implement new enforcement approaches to address violations in innovative ways, such as responding to minor violations with automated Notices of Violations and compliance assistance reminders that notify key stakeholders that facilities are in violation and responding to moderate violations with expedited administrative penalty orders. We need to be able to do this without decreasing the resources we invest in judicial enforcement to address the most serious violations that require complicated injunctive relief.

Tomorrow's workforce will rely heavily on technology, electronic data collection. In addition, the employees will need to address the changing nature of regulations, to apply scientific discovery and technical skills to understand and solve challenges to our environmental health; and to partner with the private sector, State, local, and tribal governments. To accomplish this bold vision, OECA's need for the new skills identified in the introduction will continue to grow.

In FY 2011, EPA launched an agencywide workforce planning initiative in conjunction with the agency's annual budget cycle, OECA participated fully in the process that focused on identifying critical occupations necessary to meet it current and future business/mission areas and workforce requirements. FY 2012 represented the first year that workforce planning focused on linking occupations with strategic goals. From this point forward, OECA will complete workforce plans annually in conjunction with the budget preparation process. Through this process and the identification of workforce gaps, OECA is moving forward with developing and implementing strategies to close the workforce gap. OECA's next step is to assess the office-specific results and work collaboratively to refine and improve the process.

Successfully completing this phase of OECA's succession planning will depend largely on OECA's ability to take advantage of VERA and VSIP authorities. Since this authority will give OECA the ability to more closely align its workforce with strategic goals and work towards more comprehensive position management across the organization. OECA considers strategic succession planning to be one of our most complex challenges. Our mission demands a highly scientific/technical workforce whose expertise shifts to track with ongoing technical and scientific demands. We are challenged with maintaining our institutional knowledge and gaining new expertise with limited resources.

Restructure FTE ceilings throughout OECA to meet changing priorities - In addition to providing flexibility to hire staff with the skills required to meet our organization's mission in the next three to five years and redeploy expected savings toward mission critical areas, VERA/VSIP authorities will assist OECA in shaping the new organization with the necessary skills to take OECA well into the next decade and beyond to meet changing OECA priorities.

Reaching Lower FTE Ceilings – OECA will need to reduce its FTE from 856 to 817 and use the resulting funds to rebalance the extramural needs of the organization. In addition, OECA's ongoing focus on new enforcement and compliance approaches along with substantive technological changes in how work is accomplished necessitates an influx of new skills, such as 0819 Environmental Scientist, 830 Mechanical Engineers, 0893 Chemical Engineers, 1300 Physical Scientist group, and an increase need for additional 2210 IT Specialist, at the same time it lowers its FTE ceiling. To accomplish this, the ten new hires will be selected from the job series previously mentioned. The new skills provided by the ten new hirers can be used in a number of OECA offices including OC, OEJ, and OCE. Final determination on where the new employees will be located will be dependent on which employees accept the early out/buyout and how the remaining staff and functions can be consolidated to take advantage of the newly acquired skills; the ten new employees will bring to the organization. Critical knowledge of team building principles, working cooperatively and collaboratively with others as well as strong communication skills will be required, along with the standard enforcement and compliance policy analysis skills. All nine of OECA's offices will need to realign resources and supplement the remaining workforce with at least one of the new skill sets shown above to either increase workload capabilities or replace positions with obsolete skills. All nine offices will need to share or have at least one 2210 IT specialist to support the new technology advances in the *Next Gen* compliance and enforcement strategy that call for more reliance on technology and monitoring equipment. With the exception of the Immediate Office, OECA will consolidate the personnel management and administrative management function within the Office of Administration and Policy. In addition, OECA will realign resources and combine some other additional functions to capitalize on efficiencies. This approach will give OECA a better chance of meeting lower ceilings and obtaining new skills faster.

IV. Budget Neutrality.

This request for VERA and VSIP authority, if approved, will be conducted so that no funds or resources other than those appropriated for use in Fiscal Year 2013 will be used or required. As mandated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for early-out/buy-out requests, OECA's request certifies that the early-out/buy-out will be budget neutral. This means the early

out/buyout will not result in any increased costs above current or future FY appropriations to pay for buy-out cash payments, annual leave cash payouts, or any other costs, including those associated with refilling the resulting vacancies. Table 1 below provides a summary of the numbers of employees who are eligible for voluntary retirement (also called optional or standard retirement) and the number of employees who are eligible for early retirement, **based on a combination of age and years of service under VERA**. Attachment 3 provides more details on these figures.

Table 1 Summary of Employees Eligible to Retire				
Organization	Number of Employees in OECA	Optional Retirement Eligible Employees	Early Retirement Eligible Employees	Total Number of Employees Eligible for VERA/VSIP
OECA	856	106	115	221

Over the past 10 years (from FY 2001-FY 2011) the average attrition rate for EPA including retirements was 4.9%. However, OECA's attrition rate is much smaller. In FY 2010, OECA's attrition rate was .7% and in FY 2011, it was 1.15%. Using the same rate of attrition, as last fiscal year, OECA can expect an approximate reduction of about 20 additional employees due to attrition in FY 2012 and FY 2013. Attrition alone will, therefore, be insufficient to meet the potentially significant reductions facing OECA to meet the needs of the organization to rebalance the FTEs and extramural requirements for the FY 2013 operating year.

Table 2 provides the summary details of the number of combined VERA/VSIPs that OECA plans to offer along with the number of new hires needed to complete the realignment process. Based on current OECA attrition rates, and with the additional authority to use VERA and VSIP, OECA should be able to meet the planned staffing ceiling reduction shown in the following table.

Table 2 Workforce Reshaping					
Affected Office	Current Staffing Level	Desired VERA/VSIP Offers	Anticipated Attrition in FY 2012 and FY 2013	Desired Hires to Reshape Workforce	Planned Reduced Ceiling Staffing Levels after VERA/VSIP Offer
OECA	856	(29)	(20)	10	817

Table 3 provides detailed calculations showing how OECA has assured budget neutrality in the proposal. OECA plans to use FY 2013 appropriated funds to pay for the direct cost associated with the buy-out. If the organization is under a Continuing Spending Resolution (CR), OECA will comply with all applicable funding restrictions. In addition, OECA will have carry-over funds to pay for the VSIP and annual leave payout, if the VSIP is approved.

We anticipate that any savings, estimated in Table 4 for Fiscal Year 2013, as a result of the buy-out, will be used to meet OECA's ongoing program goals and responsibilities.

Direct Cost

*Targeted Positions (See details in Attachment 3):	
29 Targeted Positions for VSIP x \$25,000 (maximum cash buy-out)	\$725,000
29 Targeted Positions for VERA, Optional Retirement, or Resignation x \$24,368 (estimated/average annual leave pay-out, based on GS-13, Step 5 [fully loaded = \$60.92 per hour] times 400 annual leave hours)	\$706,672
Total maximum direct cost	\$1,431,672

Estimated Savings

Table 4 Estimated Savings in FY 2013	
*Salary for 29 positions (based on GS-13, Step 5 [fully loaded = \$60.92 per hour] (\$126,714 x 29)	\$3,674,706
**Working Capital funds for telephone, computer and internet (\$5,000 x 29 = \$145,000.00)	\$145,000
(minus Direct Cost)	(\$1,431,672)
(Minus Salary for 10 New employees for 3 months [\$126,714/4=\$31,678.5063,357 x10 employees =)	(\$316,785)
(Minus Working capital cost for 10 New employees for 3 months[\$5,000/4=\$1,250,500 x 10 New employees =)	(\$12,500)
(Minus salary for 29 positions for 5 months) [\$126,714/12=10,559.50] { \$10,559.50 x 5 x29 employees =)	(\$1,531,127.50)
(Minus Working capital cost for 5 months (\$5,000/12=417.00 x 5 x 29 = \$60,465)	(\$60,465)
Total Savings Projected for FY 2013	\$467,156.50
Total Savings Projected for FY 2014 and beyond	\$3,819,706

*Salary calculations for Direct Cost and Estimated Savings are based on GS-13, Step 5 in Washington, D.C. Annual Salary as of 6/12 is \$100,904 or \$48.35 per hour, with an

additional 26% increase to hourly figures to account for benefits, hourly amount which equals to \$60.92 or \$126,714 annually.

**Working Capital Fund cost are based on \$5,000 per position per year for computer, telephone and internet access. Cost for 29 positions for one year is (\$5,000 x 29 = \$145,000). Cost for 4 months is calculated as follows: ($\$5000/12 = \417.00 per month x 4 = \$1,668 per position; $\$1,668 \times 29 = \$48,372$).

Indirect Cost

The indirect costs are difficult to gauge because most are specific to the employee. Indirect cost such as security clearances are based on the position and employee, if the employee already has one the cost is reduced. Transit subsidy and parking are indirect costs that are employee specific and can only be determined after the employee has been recruited and tentatively selected.

V. Performance Measures to Assess Use of the VERA and VSIP Authority

The following performance measures will be used to assess the effectiveness of VERA and VSIP:

- FY 2012 and FY 2013 Action Plans Annual Progress Reports: Summarize the progress made towards advancing the cross-cutting fundamental strategies contained in the FY 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and the specific commitments in the FY 2012 and FY 2013 Action Plans;
- Ability to reach adjusted FTE ceilings in OECA Offices by June 30, 2013 as determined by FTE and salary utilization reports;
- Number of vacancies created by departures that lead to new positions filled by hires into restructured positions that call for new skills; and
- The organizations ability to meet payroll within lower budget constraints.

These performance measure were successfully used in the 2010 Office of Compliance buy-out and early-out offer and OECA plans on adopting the same performance measures for the entire organization, since they were so successfully applied in that smaller component.

VI. Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

1. Clearly states reason(s) why the authority (VERA) is needed.

The reason why VERA is needed is to:

a. Reduce FTE to rebalance FTEs and extramural program requirements

OECA needs to reduce the number of FTEs from 856 to 817 to meet expected payroll deficient levels and increase the amount of funds available for extramural requirements. The reductions in FTEs are not achievable by attrition alone. EPA has recently initiated a 2 for 1 hiring initiative to ensure that only critical occupation series positions are backfilled and the decisions on which positions to fill are made at the most senior levels. In implementing the agency hiring restriction, OECA's senior leadership will review every proposed hire, and may be more restrictive than the agency's current 2 for 1 approach by not filling all of the vacant positions. However, even with these restrictions in place, OECA will not meet the needed FTE reductions, since there are currently very few vacant positions to be filled at this time. Therefore, irrespective of the FY 2013 budget, OECA will still need to reduce its FTE levels from 856 to 817.

b. Reshape the workforce by eliminating obsolete positions and consolidating skills

OECA is undertaking a number of efforts to consolidate and streamline our administrative and recordkeeping functions which will allow OECA to reduce its FTE ceiling from 856 to 817 and includes such actions as consolidating the human resources function under one central office; more "Self-service" use of agency systems, such as GovTrip, by professional staff and desktop training and modernization of programmatic software programs such as the Waste Import Export Tracking System (WEITS). The use of VERA authorities will allow OECA to address its workforce needs based on programmatic requirements in *Next Gen* implementation strategies, while recognizing the fiscal realities of lower FTE ceilings.

Recognizing that workforce and succession planning are on-going efforts, OECA is reviewing its strategic workforce planning process by focusing on OECA's strategic goals and objectives, reviewing the current workforce and forecasting future needs. Based on the *Workforce Planning Gap Analysis Report 2012*, and *EPA's Workforce Needs 2012-2015*, OECA will continue to need more scientific and technical occupational series to meet tomorrow's needs in the areas of 1300 Physical Scientist, 0819 Environmental, 0893 Chemical and 0830 Mechanical Engineers, along with additional 2210 IT Specialist, while reducing the number of 0303 Miscellaneous Clerks, 0343 Management and Program Analysts, Administrative and Office support areas such as 0341, Administrative Officers, and 0318 Secretaries, 0028 Environmental Protection Specialists, 1001 Communication Specialists, 0301 Administrative Specialists, and 0905 Attorneys.

This targeted reduction is a direct result of the increased use of state of the art technology such as voicemail, desktop PCs, mobile devices, and web-based collaboration tools. As technology use across the workforce has expanded, many of the activities of the administrative staff (e.g., typing, filing, screening calls, scheduling meetings, photocopying, mailing documents, time keeping, and making travel reservations) have been assumed by the office's professional and technical staff that perform these functions electronically at their desktop without a need for secretarial assistance. This change in the work environment has diminished the need for positions in the administrative field. Administrative support still required by OECA is vastly different in nature. Many of these activities can be performed as part of a broader array of duties of lower graded, junior staff, such as legal research, project tracking, software proficiency (report development and database management, coordination and liaison work, and sophisticated electronic formatting of documents). Reducing FTE currently aligned with these administrative functions will allow the programs to focus more on core mission functions, along with updating Agency data systems and tools, and OECA's new and emerging approach to promoting compliance with regulations and permits.

c. Implement Next Generation Compliance

OECA intends to reduce pollution by improving compliance with EPA regulations in ways that are more effective and efficient relying heavily on advances in information and monitoring technology. The sheer number of regulated facilities, the increasing contributions of large numbers of smaller sources to important environmental problems, and federal and state budget constraints, means we can no longer rely primarily on the traditional single facility inspection and enforcement approach to ensure compliance across the country. Our FY 2013 budget redirection investment builds on our FY 2012 *Regaining Ground* proposal that invests in 21st century technology to increase our ability to detect violations that impact public health. Reducing transaction costs and engaging the public more will drive behavioral changes in the regulated community. In FY 2013, we are proposing to redirect 44 FTE and \$3.8 million (extramural) to build the infrastructure that will allow us to push forward in implementing a new paradigm, *Next Generation Compliance* in the six areas set forth below. A key element of this approach is assisting states in modifying their programs to implement electronic reporting with their regulated facilities. We are hopeful that STAG funds provided to OEI to facilitate and expanded reporting can support that effort.

d. Attrition alone will not allow OECA to reach the lower FTE ceiling

Using the same rate of attrition, as last fiscal year and based on OECA's need to reduce the FY 2013 FTE ceiling to 817 while rebalancing the extramural funds, OECA can expect an approximate reduction of about 20 additional employees due to attrition in FY 2012 and FY 2013. Attrition alone will, therefore, be insufficient to meet necessary reductions OECA needs in the FY 2013 operating year.

2. The time period for which VERA is requested.

OECA is requesting VERA authority through September 30, 2013.

3. The date on which the Agency expects to effect the substantial delayering, etc. (e.g., reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of functions, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping).

The reshaping of the majority of the workforce will be expected no later than March 9, 2013.

4. Show the time period during which the agency plans to offer voluntary early retirement.

OECA is requesting VERA authority through September 30, 2013.

5. Provide the total number of non-temporary employees in the agency or component of the agency undergoing change.

The total number of non-temporary OECA employees located in Washington, D.C is 856.

6. Provide the total number of non-temporary employees in the agency who may be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the agency's situation (e.g., substantial delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping).

The total number of non-temporary employees in OECA, who may be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the agency's situation is 90.

7. Provide the total number of employees in the agency/organization who are eligible for voluntary early retirement (i.e., as described in this request).

There are a total of 115 employees who are eligible for VERA. Of the 115 eligible for VERA, OECA has 93 VERA eligible employees in the eight targeted job series Tables 3-1 and 3-2 in attachment 3 provide detailed information on the specific number of employees excluded and the job series associated with that position. Therefore based on this analysis, only 93 of the 115 positions will be eligible for VERA consideration.

8. Include an estimate of the total number of employees in the agency/organization who are expected to take early retirement.

The estimated number is six.

9. Provide a description of the types of personnel actions anticipated as a result of agency's need for voluntary early retirement authority.

The actions listed below provide a description of the types of personnel actions anticipated as a result of the agency's need for voluntary early retirement authority:

- Directed reassignments actions;
- Detail actions;
- Separation actions;
- Retirement actions; and
- Recruitment actions.

VII. Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP)

1. The Reason for the VSIP Request:

OECA is requesting VSIP authority to:

- a. Reduce FTE to rebalance FTE requirements and extramural program requirements to support the *Next Generation Compliance (Next Gen) Investment*

OECA needs to reduce the number of FTE and rebalance the extramural program funds needed to support the *Next Gen Investment*. In addition, OECA anticipates the need for further reductions to meet expected payroll levels and address unfunded program priorities. These reductions are not achievable by attrition alone. EPA has recently initiated a 2 for 1 hiring initiative to ensure that only critical occupation series positions are backfilled and the decisions on which positions to fill are made at the most senior levels. In implementing the Agency hiring restriction, OECA's senior leadership will be reviewing every proposed hire, and may be more restrictive than the Agency's current 2 for 1 approach by not filling all of the eligible vacant positions. However, even with these restrictions in place, OECA will not meet the reduced FTE ceilings, from 856 to 817, since there are currently very few vacant positions to be filled at this time. Therefore, irrespective of the FY 2013 budget, OECA will still need to reduce its FTE levels. To help reduce FTEs, OECA has identified 156 employees that are targeted for VSIP and /or VERA offers in eight job series.

- b. Reshape the workforce by eliminating obsolete positions and consolidating skills

OECA is undertaking a number of efforts to consolidate and streamline our administrative and recordkeeping functions which will allow OECA to reduce its FTE ceiling include such actions as consolidating the human resources function under one central office; more "Self-service" use of agency systems, such as GovTrip, by professional staff and desktop training and modernization of programmatic software programs such as the Waste Import Export Tracking System (WEITS). The use of VSIP authority will allow OECA to address its workforce needs based on programmatic requirements in *Next Gen* implementation strategies, while recognizing the fiscal realities of lower FTE ceilings.

Recognizing that workforce and succession planning are on-going efforts, OECA is reviewing its strategic workforce planning process by focusing on OECA's strategic goals and objectives, reviewing the current workforce and forecasting future needs. Based on the *Workforce Planning Gap Analysis Report 2012*, and *EPA's Workforce Needs 2012-2015*, OECA will continue to need more scientific and technical occupational series to meet tomorrow's needs in the areas of 1300 Physical Scientist, 0819 Environmental, 0893 Chemical and 0830 Mechanical Engineers, along with additional 2210 IT Specialist, while reducing the number of 0303 Miscellaneous Clerks, 0343 Management and Program Analysts, Administrative and Office support areas such as 0341, Administrative Officers, and 0318 Secretaries, 0028 Environmental Protection

Specialists, 1001 Communication Specialists, 0301 Administrative Specialists, and 0905 Attorneys.

This targeted reduction is a direct result of the increased use of state of the art technology such as voicemail, desktop PCs, mobile devices, and web-based collaboration tools. As technology use across the workforce has expanded, many of the activities of the administrative staff (e.g., typing, filing, screening calls, scheduling meetings, photocopying, mailing documents, time keeping, and making travel reservations) have been assumed by the office's professional and technical staff that perform these functions electronically at their desktop without a need for secretarial assistance. This change in the work environment has diminished the need for positions in the administrative field. Administrative support still required by OECA is vastly different in nature. Many of these activities can be performed as part of a broader array of duties of lower graded, junior staff, such as legal research, project tracking, software proficiency (report development and database management, coordination and liaison work, and sophisticated electronic formatting of documents). Reducing FTE currently aligned with these administrative functions will allow the programs to focus more on core mission functions, along with updating agency data systems and tools, and OECA's new and emerging approach to promoting compliance with regulations and permits.

c. Implement *Next Generation Compliance*

OECA intends to reduce pollution by improving compliance with EPA regulations in ways that are more effective and efficient relying heavily on advances in information and monitoring technology. The sheer number of regulated facilities, the increasing contributions of large numbers of smaller sources to important environmental problems, and federal and state budget constraints, means we can no longer rely primarily on the traditional single facility inspection and enforcement approach to ensure compliance across the country. Our FY 2013 budget redirection investment builds on our FY 2012 *Regaining Ground* proposal that invests in 21st century technology to increase our ability to detect violations that impact public health. Reducing transaction costs and engaging the public more will drive behavioral changes in the regulated community. In FY 2013, we are proposing to redirect 44 FTE and \$3.8 million (extramural) to build the infrastructure that will allow us to push forward in implementing a new paradigm, *Next Generation Compliance* in the six areas set forth below. A key element of this approach is assisting states in modifying their programs to implement electronic reporting with their regulated facilities. We are hopeful that STAG funds provided to OEI to facilitate and expanded reporting can support that effort.

d. Supplement the attrition numbers, since attrition alone will not allow OECA to reach the lower FTE ceiling required in FY 2013

Using the same rate of attrition as last fiscal year, OECA can expect an approximate reduction of about 20 additional employees due to attrition in FY 2012 and FY 2013. Attrition alone will, therefore, be insufficient to meet the potentially significant FTE reductions needed by OECA in FY 2013 to rebalance FTEs and extramural funding to

support *Next Gen*, refocus on obtaining new skills, and preserve extramural funds necessary to meet the changing mission requirements.

2. Identification of specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated (identified by organizational unit, geographic location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position).

The table shown below identifies the job series, title of the positions and number of employees that are targeted for the VSIP offer. All positions are in OECA and located in Washington, D.C. The VSIP offers will be made to employees in targeted positions who are either regular retirement eligible or early retirement eligible. Table 3-3 in Attachment 3 details the specific office, job series and grade of the targeted positions.

Targeted Positions for VSIP and/or VERA Offers				
Series	Title	Regular Retirement Eligible	Early Retirement Eligible	Total
0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy		39
0301	Administrative Management			8
0303	Administrative Management Clerk			2
0318	Secretary			10
0341	Administrative Officer			3
0343	Management and Program Analyst			55
0905	Attorney			38
1001	Communication Specialist			1
	Total	63	93	156

3. A description of the categories of employees who will be offered incentives (identified by organizational unit, geographic location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors such as skills and knowledge, or retirement eligibility).

Attachment 3 identifies the categories of employees who will be offered incentives and in addition, the positions with obsolete skills such as clerk typist will be offered incentives.

4. The time period during which the incentives may be paid.

OECA is requesting VSIP authority through September 30, 2013. The employees must be separated by March 9, 2013. The VSIP will be paid between April 21, 2013 and June 15, 2013. OECA will establish an open period to accept applications once VERA/VSIP approval has been received in order for employees to be separated by March 9, 2013.

5. The number and maximum amounts of voluntary separation incentive payments to be offered (i.e., approved).

OECA has 156 positions that will be targeted for the VSIP/VERA offer and will approve up to 29 VSIPs, totaling a maximum of \$725,000. OECA is planning on a maximum VSIP amount of no more than \$25,000 per VSIP eligible employee, or the amount of severance pay to which an employee is entitled (whichever is less). In addition, payments totaling up to \$706,672 for annual leave payout will be included in the cost associated with VSIP. As reflected in Attachment 4, tables 4-3 and 4-4 detail how the specific number of VSIPs will be offered to all employees in target series in specific offices and table 4-5, in the same attachment, shows the specific job series, grades, and offices that are excluded from the VSIP/VERA request. Decisions on who will receive VSIPs will be made on a first-in, first out selection procedure, detailed in Attachment 4.

6. A description of how the Agency will operate without the eliminated/restructured positions.

Without the eliminated/restructured positions, OECA will become a more efficient organization. We will no longer have any positions with obsolete skills and will have consolidated a number of administrative functions that were formerly performed by a variety of positions that include the job series such as 0303 miscellaneous clerk and assist (clerk typist). In addition, we will have consolidated a broader range of functions under administrative titles such as 0301 Administrative Management Specialist, 0318 Secretary, and 0341 Administrative Officer to perform such functions as human resource management, physical security and facility management functions.

In addition, the Environmental Specialist, 0028 and 0343 Management and Program Specialist utilize similar knowledge and abilities such as analytical decision making and critical thinking. We will reassign work to either of those positions (job series) as needed and create a more efficient use of resources.

With the reduced number of 0905 attorneys, OECA will rely more on technology solutions such as e-Discovery and the application of *Next Gen* compliance strategies that include electronic reporting, innovative enforcement and self-implementing rules to enable efficiencies with fewer attorney positions.

We will realign positions within the nine offices to take advantage of the most efficient organization strategies. In addition, OECA's efforts to implement Next Generation Compliance will allow us to harness the tools of the 21st century and make the enforcement program more efficient and effective for the future. By reshaping and realigning the remaining workforce, OECA will be able to take advantage of electronic reporting to support new technologies, develop and disseminate advanced monitoring tools, upgrade agency IT infrastructure to more fully exploit the wealth of available monitoring data, and modernize the EPA's approach to enforcement by ensuring new and existing rules incorporate electronic reporting.

OECA's focus on these areas will lead to improved compliance and transparency, and more efficient processes that do not rely on FTE to process documentation associated with paper-based

reporting. The use of advanced monitoring tools will allow OECA to more easily identify, investigate and address the worst violations that affect our communities. With the increase of data from monitoring and e-reporting, new analytic capabilities will be used to review and understand the data we have and ensure that it is used in strategic decision-making and targeting.

7. A proposed organizational chart displaying the expected changes in the agency's organizational structure after the agency has completed the incentive payments.

Two organizational charts are attached. Attachment 1 reflects the "current" organization and Attachment 2, reflects the expected changes in OECA's structure after the agency has completed the incentive payments.

8. If the agency has requested VERA, an explanation of how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

OECA has requested VERA. OECA will use the authority to increase the number of employees in the targeted job series who would be eligible to accept a VSIP offer, if they were allowed to retire early. Currently, there are only 63 targeted employees' positions that are eligible to accept a VSIP offer without VERA approval. The number of targeted positions would increase to 156 and will increase the probability of reaching the OECA goal to reduce FTEs by 29.

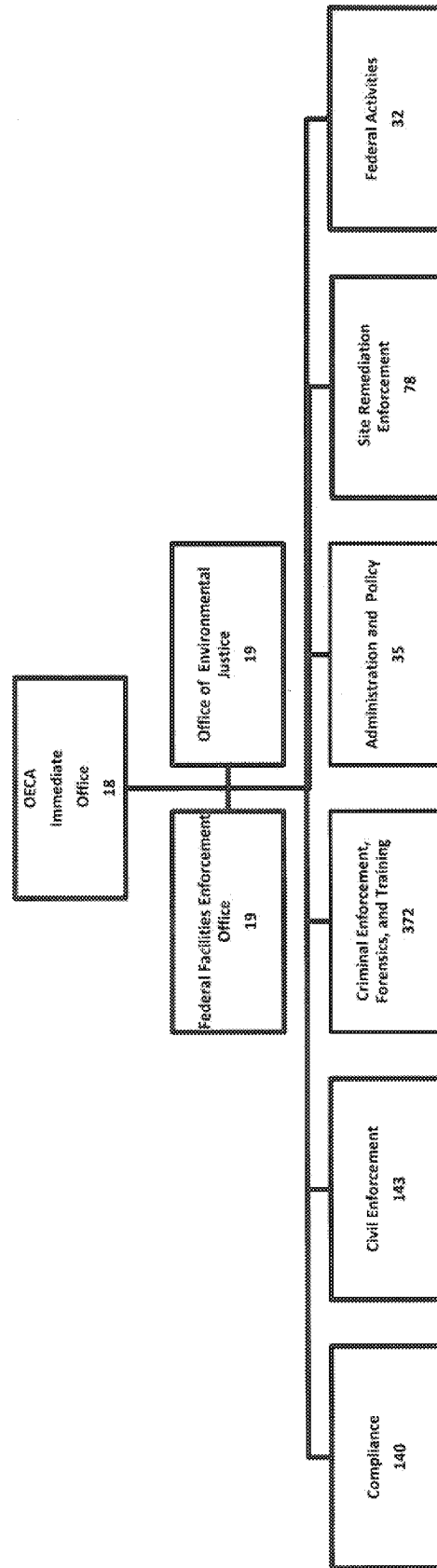
OECA will make VERA and VSIP offers simultaneously to all targeted employees during the same offer period, requiring the same separation date. VERA authority will be available to those employees in the targeted position who are not eligible for regular retirement. A total of 29 VSIPs offers will be approved and the combined use of VERA authority along with the VSIP offers will increase the odds of OECA reaching the needed reduction of FTEs.

Decisions on who receives VSIP will be offered on a "first-in, first-out" basis in conjunction with caps on the total number of VSIP offers capped by series. In offering VSIPs in conjunction with VERA, OECA expects greater employee interest and that a number of employees will request the incentives. This will maximize the effectiveness of the separation incentives and enable OECA to reshape its workforce to meet its future organizational needs.

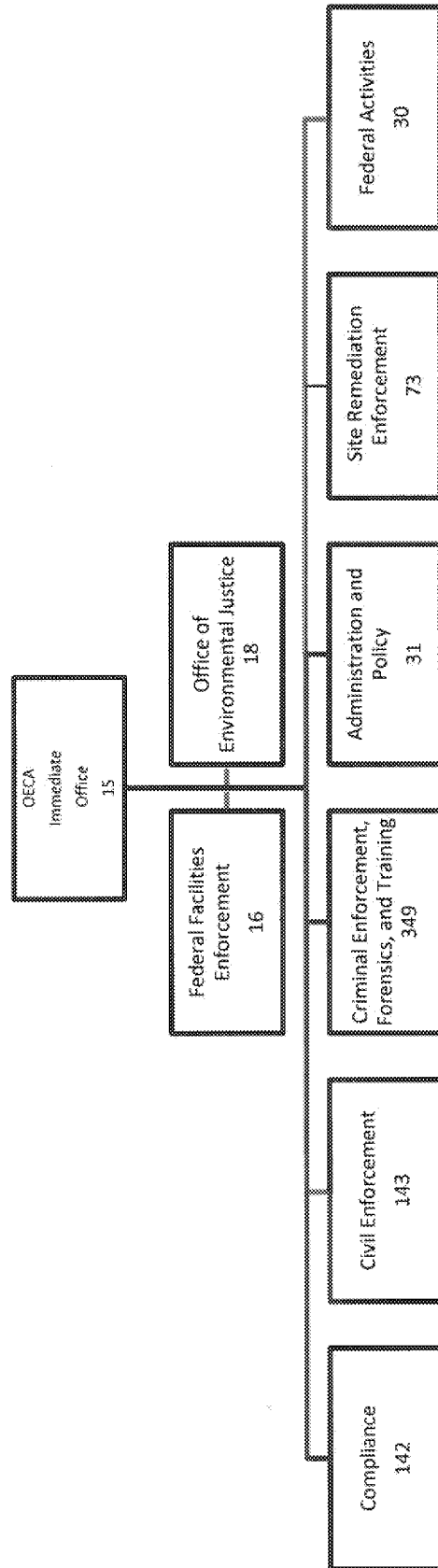
9. If the agency is offering separation incentives under other statutory authority, a description of how that authority is being used.

OECA is not offering separation incentives under any other statutory authority.

Attachment 1: OECA Current Organizational Structure



Attachment 2: OECA Proposed Organizational Structure



Targeted Positions for VERA/VSIP
 By Series/Grade and Maximum Number of
 VSIP and/or VERA to be offered in Each Series or Group
(All Positions Located in Washington, DC)

Table 3-1 shows the breakdown by job series and number of positions that are targeted for VSIP and/ or VERA in OECA.

Table 3-1 Targeted Positions for VSIP and/or VERA Offers				
Series	Title	Regular Retirement Eligible	Early Retirement Eligible	Total
0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy		
0301	Administrative Management			
0303	Administrative Management Clerk			
0318	Secretary			
0341	Administrative Officer			
0343	Management and Program Analyst			
0905	Attorney			
1001	Communication Specialist			
Total for Table 3-1		63	93	156

Table 3-2 shows the breakdown of the targeted positions, by office, title, grade and series that that have been excluded from the VSIP and VERA offers in OECA.

Table 3-2 Job Series and Positions Excluded from OECA VERA and /or VSIP Offers					
Series	Title	GRADE	Number of VSIP Targeted Positions Excluded	Number of VERA Targeted Positions Excluded	Total
0301	Information Management Specialist in OC	12	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy		
0301	Information Management Specialist in OC	13			
0301	Information Management Specialist in OC	14			
0301	Supervisory Information Management Specialist positions in OC, located in DC	15			
0905	Attorneys in OCE that work on Civil Enforcement cases	14			
0905	Attorneys in OCE that work on Civil Enforcement cases	15			
Total for Table 3-2			10	3	13

Table 3-3 lists the five occupational series that have a maximum number of VSIP offers, in conjunction with VERA associated with each particular series.

Table 3-3 Targeted Positions for VSIP and/or VERA in five specific job series				
OECA Offices in DC	Series	Grade (GS/GM)	Current Number Targeted Positions	Up To Maximum Number of VSIP and/or VERA
	0028	13		7 to 9
Office of Compliance (OC)			2	
Office of Civil Enforcement (OCE)			1	
Office of Site Remediation Enforcement (OSRE)			3	
Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)			2	
Office of Federal Activities (OFA)			1	
	0028	14		
OC			7	
OCE			3	
OFA			1	
OSRE			1	
	0028	15		
Federal Facilities Enforcement Office (FFEO)			1	
OC			9	
OCE			4	
OFA			1	
OEJ			1	
OSRE			2	
	Total 0028		39	
	0301	11		2 to 3
OCE			1	
OFA			1	
OC			1	
Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics and Training Enforcement (OCEFT)			2	
OSRE			1	
	0301	13		
Immediate Office (IO)			2	
	Total 0301		8	
OC	0343	11	1	

Office of Administration and Policy (OAP)	0343	13	5	8 to 10
OC			7	
OCE			4	
OCEFT			4	
OFA			2	
OSRE			5	
OAP	0343	14	5	
OC			3	
Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)			1	
OFA			1	
OSRE			1	
OAP	0343	15	3	
OC			4	
OCE			2	
OCEFT			4	
OFA			2	
OSRE			1	
	Total 0343		55	
FFEO	0905	14	1	8 to 10
OC			1	
OCE			2	
OCEFT			1	
OSRE			3	
FFEO	0905	15	3	
OAP			1	
OC			5	
OCE			11	
OCEFT			1	
OFA			1	
OSRE			8	
	Total 0905		38	
All Offices are located in DC				2 to 3
OC	0318	8	1	
OC	0318	9	3	
OCE			2	
OAP			1	
OCEFT			2	
OAP	0318	10	1	

	Total 0318		10	
Total for Table 3-3			150	27

Table 3-4 reflects a list of three job series consolidated into one group. The VSIP and/or VERA will be offered to the first 2 employees requesting it in any of those three job series, since the number of eligible positions in any one series is very limited.

Table 3-4 Targeted Positions Eligible for VSIP and or VERA offers in three specific job series				
OECA Office in Washington, DC	Series	Grade (GS/GM)	Current Number Targeted Positions	Up To Maximum Number of VERA/VSIPs to be Offered in Series
OCE	0303	5	1	2 to 3
OFA	0303	7	1	
OSRE	0341	10	1	
OSRE	0341	11	1	
OCE	0341	12	1	
IO	1001	15	1	
Total for Table 3-4			6	2

Table 3-5 shows the total number of targeted employees and the total number of VSIP offers to be made.

Table 3-5 Total number of Targeted Positions to be offered VSIP and/or VERA and total number of VSIPs to be offered		
	Current Number of Targeted Positions	Up To Maximum Number of VSIPs to be Offered in Series
Total for Table 3-3	150	27
Total for Table 3-4	6	2
Total for Table 3-5	156	29

Methodology for VSIP and/or VERA Acceptance Process

The total number of VSIPs offered will be 29. The use of VERA will be used in conjunction with the VSIP offers. The submissions selection process will be based on a “first-in, first-out” process for each of the five specific job series shown in Example Table 4-1, which has a target cap of 27 and the three job series combined in Example Table 4-2 have a targeted cap of 2. In addition, the maximum number of VSIP and/or VERA offers per series column is the maximum number of VSIP offers and/or VERA offers that will be accepted in that particular occupational series or group of series up to the total capped quantity of 29 VSIP offers.

Table 4-1 Example (Job Series)			
Job Series	Title	Targeted Number of VSIP and/or VERA Offers Per Targeted Series	Maximum Number of VSIP and/or VERA Offers Per Targeted Series
0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy	
0301	Administrative Management Specialist		
0318	Secretary		
0343	Management and Program Analyst		
0905	Attorney		
	Total VERA/VSIP Offered	27	

Table 4-2 Example (Consolidated Job Series)			
Job Series	Title	Targeted Number of VSIP and/or VERA VERA/VSIP Offers Per Combined Targeted Series	Maximum Number of VSIP and/or VERA Offers Per Combined Targeted Series
0303	Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy	
0341	Administrative Officer		
1001	Communication specialist		
	Total VERA/VSIP Offered	2	

The following information is providing to explain how this process will work:

For example, suppose that the following 35 VERA/VSIP packages are submitted on July 16, July 23, and July 30, 2012 respectively and these dates are within the submission window. OECA will time and date stamp submissions as they are received. Example Table 4-3 illustrates

the 35 submission packages and the date and time the packages were submitted to OECA for a VERA/VSIP offer.

Example Table 4-3 Submitted packages			
Time and Date Submitted	Series	Title	Number of Submission
09:30 am July 16, 2012	0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	1
09:45 am July 16, 2012	0301	Administrative Management Specialist	2
10:11 am July 16, 2012	0318	Secretary	3
12:01pm July 16, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	4
12:02 pm July 16, 2012	0905	Attorney	5
1:15 pm July 16, 2012	0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	6
1:16 pm July 16, 2012	0301	Administrative Management Specialist	7
2:19 pm July 16, 2012	0318	Secretary	8
3:21pm July 16, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	9
3:35 pm July 16, 2012	0905	Attorney	10
3:55 pm July 16, 2012	0303	Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant	11
4:15 pm July 16, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	12
07:30 am July 23, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	13
07:31 am July 23, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	14
08:40 am July 23, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	15
09:30 am July 23, 2012	1001	Communication specialist	16
09:35 am July 23, 2012	0301	Administrative Management Specialist	17
10:30 am July 23, 2012	0318	Secretary	18
10:35 am July 23, 2012	0301	Administrative Management Specialist	19
11:30 am July 23, 2012	0341	Administrative Officer	20
12:30 pm July 23, 2012	0905	Attorney	21
1:30 pm July 23, 2012	0318	Secretary	22
07:45 am July 30, 2012	0905	Attorney	23
08:15 am July 30, 2012	0905	Attorney	24
08:35 am July 30, 2012	0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	25
08:45 am July 30, 2012	0028	Environmental Protection Specialist	26
08:55 am July 30, 2012	0318	Secretary	27
09:00 am July 30, 2012	0301	Administrative Management Specialist	28
09:11 am July 30, 2012	0905	Attorney	29
09:42 am July 30, 2012	0341	Administrative Officer	30
09:43 am July 30, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	31
09:45 am July 30, 2012	0905	Attorney	32
09:45 am July 30, 2012	1001	Communication specialist	33
10:30 am July 30, 2012	0905	Attorney	34
11:55 am July 30, 2012	0343	Management and Program Analyst	35

Step 1:

Review the first 29 submission packages by placing the submission number in the column, as demonstrated in Example Table 4-4, which reflects the VERA/VSIP submission package position and how many of each series was submitted up to the maximum submission number.

Example Table 4-4 Ranking										
Series	Accept 1	Accept 2	Accept 3	Accept 4	Accept 5	Accept 6	Accept 7	Accept 8	Accept 9	Accept 10
0028	1	6	25	26						
0301	2	7	17	19	28					
0318	3	8	18	22	27					
0343	4	9	12	13	14	15	31	35		
0905	5	10	21	23	23	29	32	34		
0303	11									
1001	16	33								
0341	20	30								

Step 2:

Next total the number of request for each series and group against the target and maximum VSIP offers and/or VERA to be offered in Example Table 4-5

Example Table 4-5				
Series	Number of Packages Submitted	Target	Maximum by Job Series	Accepted
0028	4	7	9	4
0301*	5	2	3	3
0318	5	2	3	3
0343	8	8	10	8
0905	8	8	10	8
0303*	1	2	3	3
1001*	2			
0341*	2			
Total	35	29		29

* Note: Only the first three submissions were accepted for job series 0301 and only for first submission for job series 0303, 1001, and 0341, since they each met the maximum allocation for that particular job series.

This process addresses the “first-in, first-out procedure and still allows OECA some control over the mix of job series that will be reduced while still providing adequate assurance that our target numbers of 29 is met.



Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Separation Incentive Authorities



WHAT ARE VERA and VSIP AUTHORITIES?

Tools to implement management decisions when an agency must reduce or restructure its workforce:

- Undergoing substantial organizational change (e.g., delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, reshaping); and
- A significant percentage of employees are likely to be involuntarily separated or demoted; or
- Employees have been identified in positions that are becoming surplus or excess to the agency's future ability to effectively carry out its mission (e.g., different skill sets needed, effect of IT on positions, etc.).

[DateTime]

2



Voluntary Separation Incentive Program

- Applying for and accepting a VSIP is at the discretion of the employee
- Serves in a position covered by OPM 's authorization
- Must separate during VSIP period, decided by agency
- Employees may separate via resignation, optional retirement or early retirement, if VERA has been approved
- Up to \$25,000 or severance pay, whichever is less
- Re-employed by the federal government within 5 years must pay the entire amount back to EPA
- Be serving in an appointment without time limit
- Employed continuously for at least 3 years in Executive Branch

[DateTime]

3



Ineligible for VSIP

- Re-employed annuitants
- May be eligible for disability retirement
- Receipt of a decision to remove from federal government notice
- Previously received a VSIP
- Student loan repayment benefit received in the preceding 36 month period (date of separation); was paid or is to be paid
- Recruitment or relocation incentive received in the preceding 24 month period (date of separation); was paid or is to be paid
- Retention incentive received in the preceding 12 month period (date of separation); was paid or is to be paid

[DateTime]

4



Voluntary Early Retirement Authority

- Meet the minimum age and service requirements:
 - 50 years old and 20 years of creditable service or 25 years of creditable service and any age
 - CSRS – 2% penalty for each year under age 55
 - FERS – no annuity reduction; however, no FERS supplement until reaching MRA
- Serves in a position covered by OPM 's authorization for the minimum time specified by OPM (usually 30 days prior to agency's request)
- Separate by the close of the early retirement period



VERA and VSIP ARE NOT!

- Short term solution for budget cuts
- To be used for anticipated scenarios
- For positions that have direct hire authority or are paying recruitment incentives, e.g. IT Specialist (Information Security)

[DateTime]

6



JUSTIFICATIONS MUST INCLUDE:

- Detailed summary of how the authorities will be used and the anticipated results
- An explanation why the requested incentive(s) are an appropriate strategy for making the required workforce adjustments
- The total number of employees expected to be affected and expected to take advantage of the incentive(s)
- Anticipated budget impact, i.e. direct and indirect costs, savings, etc. (Projected cost savings well received by OMB)
- Detailed list of positions that will be impacted and offered the incentive(s) identified by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level and any other relevant factors
- A budget neutral statement
- An explanation of how the organization will operate without the eliminated positions
- Current and proposed organizational charts

[DateTime]

7



THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Use all the templates i.e. EPA's and OPM's VERA and VSIP
- Tell your story, have a plan and be specific
- Link justification to workforce and succession plans
- Target positions, not employees
- Must be in compliance with the correspondence manual
- No requirement to request both VERA and VSIP
- May hire as appropriate

[DateTime]

8



THE PROCESS (4-6 months)

- Submit draft to OARM/OHR/HRPD for review and feedback (30-34 business days from 1st draft submission to final draft being forwarded by HRPD for review/approval)
- Deputy Administrator's preliminary approval (5 to 21 days from being forwarded by HRPD)
- Informal review by OPM (16-25 days) and OMB (12 days-after OPM has given ok with informal review)
- Submit package for Administrator's approval and signature (12-23 days)
- Submit officially to OPM and OMB
- Receive Approval (25-29 days from official submission)

[DateTime]

9

QUESTIONS

???????



OHR CONTACTS

John Taylor

taylor.john@epa.gov

202-564-0948

Lewis Curtis

curtis.lewis@epa.gov

202-564-8548

[DateTime]

11

Message

From: Hart, Debbi [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=62AFB40F2BF1484D933F2CE207EB20E7-HART, DEBRA]
Sent: 5/19/2017 2:42:31 PM
To: Westenberger, Andrea [Westenberger.Andrea@epa.gov]; Hunt, Loretta [Hunt.Loretta@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: Message to regions regarding 5/19 V/V submissions and impact on 5/24 packages?

Andrea- yes planning to send a message but not exactly what you state. Will call soon.

Debbi Hart
Director
Policy, Planning & Training Division
OHR, OARM
USEPA
202.564.2011
hart.debbi@epa.gov

From: Westenberger, Andrea
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2017 6:35 PM
To: Hart, Debbi <Hart.Debbi@epa.gov>; Hunt, Loretta <Hunt.Loretta@epa.gov>
Subject: Message to regions regarding 5/19 V/V submissions and impact on 5/24 packages?

Hi Debbi and Loretta,

Loretta and I just spoke on the phone and she said that Debbi might send a message out stating that the 5/24 deadline still stands but that it could change (along with the V/V proposals) based on feedback from the 5/19 submissions that will be reviewed by the politicals. Will you be sending that out on Friday? I know there have been many questions about it in the ARA, DARA, and HRO community.

Thanks,
Andrea

Andrea Westenberger
Lead Region Coordinator for OCFO & OARM
EPA Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, OMP 21-101
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 553-6111 (office)

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

 (cell)
westenberger.andrea@epa.gov

Combined Request for Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Agency:

Covered Component(s):

VSIP and VERA

1. Explain the workforce situation the organization needs to address through VSIP and VERA that would otherwise require involuntary personnel actions, e.g., layering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping.

Combination of VERA #1 and VSIP #1

2. Identify the end date for separations under VSIP and VERA.

Combination (with modification) of VERA #2 and VSIP #4.

Recommend adding the following note:

Provide the end date for the authorities as well as the final date for employees to separate from the agency's employment roles.

Required information for VSIP request

3. Identify the specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position, such as skills and knowledge gaps.

VSIP # 2

4. Describe the categories of employees who will be offered VSIP by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position such as skills or knowledge gaps, or retirement eligibility.

VSIP #3

5. Identify the number of VSIPs to be paid and the maximum amount of each VSIP (up to \$25,000).

VSIP #5

6. Describe how the organization will operate without the eliminated positions and functions identified in number 1.

VSIP #6

7. Provide a proposed organization chart showing the expected changes to the organization's structure after completing the VSIP plan.

VSIP #7

8. If requesting, or will request, VERA, describe how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

VSIP #8

Recommend adding note:

This discussion should explain the extent to which the agency believes it will reach its voluntary separation goals by combining VERA with VSIP as an enticement for voluntary separation. If the agency believes the VERA, when used with VSIP may entice certain employees to retire early to receive a VSIP, it should provide that information and explain the anticipated, positive effect that VERA will have on the VSIP acceptance rate.

9. If offering VSIPs under another statutory authority, describe how VSIPs are being used under that authority.

VSIP #9

Required information for VERA request

10. Provide the anticipated effective date of the substantial delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping described in number 1.

VERA #3-without the note below

Recommending adding the note back in.

(Note: The date provided should not be earlier than the ending date provided in number 2)

11. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s).

VERA #4

12. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the reason(s) in number 1.

VERA #5-however, leaves out “appointed” and note.

Recommend adding note and revise to take out appointed.

For example, if you are requesting VERA based on a need to reshape your workforce to correct skills imbalances, you will likely experience voluntary separations, reassignments, and reclassifications. The sum of these anticipated actions is the number we’re seeking.

13. Provide the total number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are eligible for voluntary early retirement. (Do not include employees eligible for optional retirement.)

VERA #6

14. Provide an estimate of the number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to take voluntary early retirement.

VERA #7

15. Describe the types of personnel actions anticipated as a result of the reason(s) in number 1 (e.g., reassignments, downgrades, separations) that would occur without VERA.

VERA #8-however #8 states "in conjunction with VERA" not "without VERA"

VERA and VSIP Requests

Each package submitted for review should contain the following information:

1. Specific details about the organization for which VERA and VSIP authorities are being requested that is broken down by subcomponent, office, division, etc.
2. Detailed reason why VERA and VSIP are being requested.

The request must include a detailed summary of the organization's personnel and/or budgetary situation that will result in an excess of personnel because of a substantial layering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping. The organization's reasons for the request must be consistent with the agency's human capital goals and strategic plan.

3. A description of how the organization will operate without the eliminated or restructured positions and functions (i.e., how will the organization be able to meet its goals, responsibilities and/or fulfill its mission). Discuss rehires (how many rehires, what types of positions identified by titles, series and grade or skill sets needed).
4. A detailed description of how the organization plans to reshape its workforce.
5. The date(s) on which the organization expects to implement the substantial reshaping of its workforce.
6. A description of the types of personnel actions that the organization anticipates may be necessary as a result of the agency's need for VERA and VSIP. Examples of personnel actions include separations, transfers, reassignments, and downgradings.
7. A list of targeted occupations by series, grade, title, geographic location and organizational unit (e.g., office or division).
8. A short explanation of how VERA will be used in conjunction with VSIP. This discussion should explain the extent to which the organization believes it will reach its goals by combining VERA with VSIP as an enticement for voluntary separation.
9. The time period(s) for which the organization plans to offer VERA and VSIP and when employees should be off the rolls.
10. The total number of permanent employees in the organization.

11. The total number of permanent employees in the organization who are expected to be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the substantial reshaping of the workforce.
12. The total number of employees in the organization who are eligible for voluntary early retirement.
13. An estimate of the total number employees in organization who are expected to take voluntary early retirement.
14. A description of the categories of employees who will be offered VSIP, identified by organizational unit, geographic location, occupational series, grade level, and any other factors, such as skills, knowledge, or retirement eligibility.
15. The number of targeted positions and the maximum VERA/VSIP approvals.
16. The maximum amounts of VSIPs to be offered.
17. Selection criteria for approvals (e.g., federal service computation date, EOD at EPA, first-in/first-out, grouped by positions/occupations with maximum approvals, grouped by organizational components with maximum approvals, overall organization, or a combination)
18. Direct costs for VERA and VSIP. VERA and VSIP must be budget neutral. The organization must provide the basis for any calculations, attrition rates, averages and estimates used in the request.
19. Projected savings from the reshaping of the workforce. In projecting savings or attrition from VERA and VSIP, the agency should not assume that all or even most of the employees eligible for VERA and VSIP will actually retire. The organization must provide the basis for any calculations, attrition rates, averages and estimates used in the request.
20. Current organization chart.
21. New organization chart.

Message

From: Hart, Debbi [Hart.Debbi@epa.gov]
Sent: 7/20/2017 1:41:10 AM
To: Parker, Gary [parker.gary@epa.gov]; Hunt, Loretta [Hunt.Loretta@epa.gov]
Subject: Fwd: VERA VSIP Applications Receiv

Getting close to my estimate-- just sayin'

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Helm, Arron" <Helm.Arron@epa.gov>
Date: July 19, 2017 at 5:10:40 PM EDT
To: "Vizian, Donna" <Vizian.Donna@epa.gov>, "Showman, John" <Showman.John@epa.gov>, "Hart, Debbi" <Hart.Debbi@epa.gov>, "Hunt, Loretta" <Hunt.Loretta@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: VERA VSIP Applications Received

ALL by HR SSC

HR Shared Service Center	Total
Cincinnati	178
ERD	3
Las Vegas	44
RTP	139
	Total:
	414

Program or Region	Total
AO	13
OAR	3
OARM	28
OCFO	16
OCSPP	13
OECA	41
OEI	17
OGC	1
OITA	3
OLEM	12
ORD	31
OW	23
Region 1	26
Region 10	4
Region 2	7
Region 3	43
Region 4	23
Region 5	27
Region 6	36
Region 7	32
Region 8	3
Region 9	12
	Total:
	414

Message

From: Kuhns, Jason [Kuhns.Jason@epa.gov]
Sent: 4/7/2017 8:25:47 PM
To: Hart, Debbi [Hart.Debbi@epa.gov]; Parker, Gary [parker.gary@epa.gov]
Subject: data follow up
Attachments: attrition info 4.7.17.xlsx

Just a follow up to this morning, attached is an attrition break down for this year and comparison of other years.

Also, from the first round of V/V, 340 of 456 were retirement eligible and those people were an average of 5.7 years past their eligibility date.

Thanks,

Jason Kuhns
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Human Resources
202-564-3236
kuhns.jason@epa.gov



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Request for
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments
and
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority
for
Organization EPA Region 4**

- I. Introduction**
- II. Background**
- III. Reshaping the Workforce**
- IV. Budget Neutrality/Costs/Savings**
- V. Template for Combined VSIP/VERA Request**

Supporting Documentation:

Figure 1 – Current Organization Chart

Table 1 – Summary of Targeted Positions

Table 2 – Summary of Targeted Positions by Duty Station

Table 3 – Supervisor to Staff Ratio

**Table 4 – Targeted Supervisory Positions and Maximum Number that are Eligible for
VERA/VSIPs**

**Table 5 – Targeted Non-Supervisory Positions (0301 Series) and Maximum Number that are
Eligible for VERA/VSIPs**

**Table 6 - Targeted Environmental Protection Specialist Positions (0028 Series) and
Maximum Number that are Eligible for VERA/VSIPs**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 4
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments
and
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority**

I. Introduction

In accordance with Section 1313(b) of the Chief Human Capital Officer's Act of 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 is requesting approval authority through April 30, 2014, for the use of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA/Early-Out) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP/Buy-Out) in EPA's Region 4.

Region 4 is requesting FY 2014 VERA/VSIP authority to accomplish the workforce restructuring goals and objectives identified below. Use of the authorities in FY 2014 will help the Region increase our current supervisor to staff ratio and reduce/reshape our workforce by targeting surplus or excess positions. This will also help create a limited number of vacancies to recruit new staff with critical knowledge, skills and abilities in current and new job classification series to create a higher-performing organization in support of the Agency's and Region's mission critical priorities.

Region 4 will use these authorities to:

1. Reduce and Reshape our Supervisor to Staff Ratio

Currently, supervisory positions equate to approximately 12% of Region 4's workforce. This is a result of historically high attrition of staff positions and gradual reduction of FTEs over the past several years. The Region's current supervisor to staff ratio is 1:7. Region 4 experienced a 5.1% attrition rate in 2011; a 4.4% rate in 2012; and a 5.7% rate in 2013. This attrition resulted in a decrease in permanent employees from 1069 in FY 2011 to our current number of 961. This substantially reduced our supervisor to staff ratio and created a surplus of supervisors. Our goal in FY 2014 is to achieve a supervisor to staff ratio of 1:9. **Both the VERA and VSIP opportunities will be offered to up to 13 supervisory employees in organizations, occupations, and grade levels 14 and 15 located within the EPA Region 4 Atlanta and Athens Offices.** (See Tables 3 and 4)

2. Reduce our Number of Non-Supervisory GS-14/15 Positions

Previous Regional workforce planning efforts have resulted in 52 non-supervisory GS-14 and 15 staff positions in Technical Expert or Senior Advisor positions across all Region 4 divisions. An assessment of Regional priorities has resulted in a need for us to re-evaluate these positions to ensure optimum utilization. In FY 2014, we will use target positions in the 0301 occupational series that are no longer critical, given changing mission requirements and workforce reshaping efforts. There are a total of 27 employees currently in the 0301 occupational series and 44% of those are at the GS-14 or 15 level. **We plan to reduce the number of positions in this category by 5 positions.** (See Table 5)

3. Reduce our Number of Support Positions in Environmental Protection Specialist (EPS) Positions

Region 4 currently has 67 employees in the EPS, 0028 occupational series. We expect Agency efficiencies projected in FY 2014 and 2015 to result in enhanced business processes that will create the need to restructure and reduce the work in these positions, especially grants management responsibilities. In Region 4, Project Officers manage as few as one grant while others manage over 50. The Agency workload model supports Project Officers being responsible for 20-40 grants, depending on complexity. Because of Regional and national business process efficiency efforts underway, we

anticipate this could significantly reduce the need for our current number of EPS positions in the future. **We are projecting to reduce the number of positions in this category by 8 positions.** (See Table 6)

Both VSIP and VERA opportunities will be offered to staff as indicated above. These targeting decisions were made by senior managers based on the specific mission needs required to reshape divisions and better prepare and align our workforce for the future. Decisions about who receives VERA and VSIP will be prioritized based on the employee's official Service Computation Date, with priority given to those with the highest years of combined service at the EPA should two or more applicants within a VERA and VSIP eligible category have the same Service Computation Date.

II. Background

EPA Region 4 employs 961 permanent employees responsible for carrying out EPA's environmental and human health mission in partnership with 8 states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) and 6 federally recognized Tribes. The region conducts oversight of state and tribal programs to ensure they comply with Federal laws and regulations, as well as ensure equitable environmental and public health protection through effective implementation of policies and procedures. The region also directly implements programs in some states and tribal territories (including permitting, inspections, and enforcement), conducts federal rulemaking, and administers grants and contracts.

Region 4 is organizationally divided into divisions and offices. The "media" divisions (Air, Pesticides, and Toxics Management Division, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Division, Superfund Division, and Water Protection Division) are responsible for implementing the relevant environmental laws, such as the Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, and Clean Water Act. The Office of Policy and Management manages the region's resources, including personnel, facilities, and extramural funding. The Science and Ecosystem Support Division provides quality science support for congressional mandates and initiatives; partnerships with academia; and states, locals and tribal nations. The other offices (Office of Environmental Accountability and Office of External Affairs) are responsible for activities that cross divisional boundaries.

Agency and Regional mission critical priorities require Region 4 to reduce, rebalance and restructure our workforce in a manner not possible through current attrition rates. The Agency's mission priorities of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality, managing chemical risks, cleaning up hazardous waste sites and protecting America's waters require us to have a cadre of employees with strong technical backgrounds. Science must be the backbone for EPA's programs and this requires Region 4 to ensure a strong cadre of technical staff and conduct continuous succession planning to guarantee a pool of employees ready to step up into key technical positions. It is for these reasons that Region 4 has specifically targeted two of our administrative occupational series (0028 and 0301) in this VERA/VSIP request.

Although Region 4 has an average attrition rate of about 5%, it is necessary to target surplus/excess supervisory and administrative professional positions to ensure mission critical priorities are addressed. Consistent with Agency-wide data, Region 4 employees stay on average five (5) years past their retirement eligible date. Agency priorities and efficiencies projected in FY 2014 and 2015 create an opportunity for Region 4 to restructure administrative professional positions (e.g., Senior Advisors and Environmental Protection Specialists). Continued advancements in automation/IT technologies will foster further streamlining and redefine our work, allowing people to manage workloads more effectively and with greater consistency.

In reviewing a representative sample of the region's workforce demographics, we have determined that there is an imbalance in the ratio of the number of supervisory positions at the GS-14 and GS-15 levels. The current average ratio of supervisors to staff in Region 4 is 1:7, with variations in individual divisions/offices that range from 1:5 to 1:13. In accordance with the Office of Personnel Management standards, supervisor to staff ratio should reflect a 1:10 to 1:12 ratio. Region 4 will increase its supervisor to staff ratio by reducing our number of supervisors in FY 2014 to achieve a 1:9 ratio. We will use these reductions to support a new organizational structure in FY 2015 that will incorporate the FY 2014 reduction. We also anticipate additional reductions in this category in FY 2015 to achieve a final 1:10 to 1:11 ratio.

Ultimately, our reduction and restructuring plan will result in a more balanced grade level structure within the region. We will have fewer GS-14 and above positions and more employees employed in program and support positions that lead to a GS-12/13 full performance level.

III. Reshaping the Workforce

As part of our planning process, we reviewed our workforce demographics to determine the number of positions, occupations, and grade levels to be considered for workforce reshaping in FY 2014. Based on a careful analysis of Region 4's workforce and Agency priorities, we will target our supervisory to staff ratio, non-supervisory GS-14/15 positions in the 0301 occupational series and employees in 0028 Environmental Protection Specialist positions. Region 4 currently has a supervisory to staff ratio of 1:7 and has identified the need for more technical positions moving into the future. Reshaping our workforce through eliminating the current number of Senior Advisors (0301) and Environmental Protection Specialist (0028) positions will allow us to increase our supervisor to staff ratio to approximately 1:9 and target excess or surplus positions so that we can meet our need for cutting edge, highly technical skills.

Below are some general workforce statistics for Region 4 that this request has taken into consideration in our decision to offer 26 VERA/VSIP offers in FY 2014. As evidenced by the statistics below, Region 4's average grade of employees is almost at the GS-13 level, with over 65% of our staff at GS-13 and above levels.

- Average Grade: 12
- % of Staff at GS-14/15 Level: 24.7%
- % of Staff at GS-13 Level: 41.4%
- % of Staff at GS-9/12 Level: 28.7%

Below is a summary of the three areas Region 4 will target with VERA/VSIP:

Reduction in Supervisors at the GS-14/15 Level: Our review revealed that over the past several years, we have had a significant drop in our supervisor to staff ratio from the Office of Personnel Management's recommended 1:11 ratio to a Regional average of 1:7. This is due primarily to Region 4's drop in permanent employees from 1069 in FY 2011 to our current number of 961. In some divisions, the ratio is averaging 1:6.5 and in others it is slightly higher. This has created a need to offer early outs and buy outs to rectify this imbalance and create an opportunity for Region 4 to generate enough attrition in our supervisory ranks to reduce and rebalance in this area. Reductions in this area will serve as a foundation for our Regional reorganization in FY 2015, where we anticipate additional supervisory reductions.

Reduction in Number of Non-Supervisory Positions at GS-14/15: In the area of non-supervisory GS-14/15's, Region 4 has identified that we have a number of positions in the 0301 (non-technical) series

that we are targeting for reduction. These include a number of special assistants, matrix-managers or senior advisors that were established in years past. For some of these positions, the work being performed can readily be folded into the portfolio of other senior level employees within the region. In other instances, the work has become less of an agency or regional priority or is no longer cutting edge and, as such, no longer supports a highly-graded stand-alone position. We anticipate that reductions in this area will allow us to do modest hiring in more technical positions such as environmental engineers, physical scientists, life scientists, and like positions.

Reduction in Number of Environmental Protection Specialists: In our final area of support positions, we have targeted Environmental Protection Specialist (0028) positions for a variety of reasons. This occupational series is the series that has a number of staff performing grants management functions across all divisions as Project Officers. In Region 4, these Project Officers are managing grants anywhere from a low of 1 to a high of 52. The Agency workload model supports Project Officers being responsible for 20-40 grants, depending on complexity. Additionally, there are national business process efficiency efforts underway that could significantly reduce the number of Project Officers needed in the future. Finally, in Region 4, we have traditionally used the EPS occupational series to provide upward mobility opportunities for our high performing and high potential administrative support employees.

As with the Senior Advisor (0301) positions, Region 4 believes that with increased technology, business process improvements, organizational changes, and new mission priorities, targeting these positions will provide us with an opportunity to potentially backfill these positions with entry level Environmental Engineers (0819), Physical Scientists (1301), and Life Scientists (0401) as our hiring situation will allow. These technical series more closely align with the Agency's and Region's priorities and will be used to bring in entry level technical staff as the opportunities become available.

In summary, we plan to use VERA and VSIP to reduce, restructure and rebalance our workforce through a multi-pronged approach:

- Increase our supervisory to staff ratio to align with the Office of Personnel Management's recommended ratio of 1:11 (with a goal of 1:9 in FY 2014 and 1:10 to 1:11 in FY15);
- reduce the overall number of non-supervisory administrative positions in the Region at higher grade levels in the 0301 series (GS-14 and 15);
- consolidate higher graded duties into remaining GS-13, 14 and 15 positions to ensure optimum utilization of staff; and
- address the changing nature of workforce skill requirements due to new mission priorities by targeting Environmental Protection Specialist positions because of efficiencies to be gained due to current and future business process improvements.

When higher graded employees leave, we will implement a modest replacement plan (approximately one hire for every three vacancies, assuming our normal attrition rate and VERA/VSIP losses) and replace these positions, as appropriate, with entry-level (GS-7/9/11) technical employees with a full promotion potential to the GS-12/13 grade level. Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, the region will reassign the most complex work to existing higher graded positions in order to concentrate the assignment of this work into fewer positions. We believe modest rehiring will meet our needs, while preserving budgetary flexibility.

IV. Budget Neutrality/Costs/Savings

Budget Neutrality

This request for VERA and VSIP authority, if approved, will be conducted so that no funds or resources other than those appropriated for use in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 will be used or required.

As mandated by the Office of Management and Budget for early-out/buy-out requests, Region 4's request certifies that the early-out/buy-out will be budget neutral. This means the early-out/buy-out authority will not result in any increased costs above current or future FY appropriations to pay for costs incurred for buy-out cash payments, annual leave cash payouts, or any other costs, including those associated with refilling the resulting vacancies.

The following tables detail calculations showing how Region 4 has assured budget neutrality in the proposal for FY 14. The direct maximum costs associated with VERA and VSIP is \$999,392. Table A provides details of the direct costs associated with VERA and VSIP. Savings projected through FY 16 as a result of the VERA and VSIP are estimated to be more than \$10,262,000. Table B provides the detailed calculations of the savings achieved in FY 14 and FY 15. The savings will be used to meet Region 4's ongoing program goals and responsibilities.

If the organization is under a Continuing Spending Resolution (CR), Region 4 will comply with all applicable funding restrictions to pay for the VSIP and annual leave payout, if the VSIP is approved. If necessary, our rehiring plans may be adjusted to ensure we expend only those resources allocated for use in FY 14.

Direct Costs

Table A - Direct Costs for VERA/VSIP

Targeted Positions

26 Targeted Positions for VSIP x \$25,000 (maximum cash buy-out)	\$650,000.00
26 Targeted Positions for VERA, Optional Retirement, or Resignation* (Avg. per hr. x 240 x 26)	\$349,392.00
Total maximum direct costs	\$999,392.00

Indirect Costs

The indirect costs are difficult to gauge because most are specific to the employee. Indirect costs such as security clearances are based on the position and employee. If the employee already has one, the cost is reduced. Transit subsidy and parking are indirect costs that are employee specific and can only be determined after the employee has been recruited and tentatively selected.

V. Combined Request for Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Agency: Environmental Protection Agency

Covered Component(s): Region 4

VSIP and VERA

1. Explain the workforce situation the organization needs to address through VSIP and VERA that would otherwise require involuntary personnel actions, e.g., delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping.

Region 4 is requesting FY 2014 VERA/VSIP authority to accomplish the workforce restructuring goals and objectives identified below. This will help the Region increase our supervisor to staff ratio and reduce and reshape our workforce by targeting surplus or excess administrative positions. It will also create a limited number of vacancies to recruit new staff with critical technical knowledge, skills and abilities in some current and new job classification series to create a higher-performing organization.

Region 4 will use these authorities to:

1. Reduce and Reshape our Supervisor to Staff Ratio

Currently, supervisory positions equate to approximately 12% of Region 4's workforce. This is a result of historically high attrition for staff positions and gradual reduction of FTEs over the past several years. The Region's current supervisor to staff ratio is 1:7. This is due to a 5.1% attrition rate in 2011; a 4.4% rate in 2012; and a 5.7% in 2013. The aforementioned attrition resulted in a decrease in permanent employees from 1069 in FY 2011 to our current number of 961.

Region 4 will increase its supervisor to staff ratio by reducing our number of supervisors. **Both VERA and VSIP opportunities will be offered to up to 13 supervisory employees in organizations, occupations, and grade levels 14 and 15 located within the EPA Region 4 office, including Athens.**

The VERA and VSIP opportunities will be offered to supervisory staff located throughout the region. Programmatic occupations are listed in Table 4. **Based on the current number of supervisors in the Region, we will offer 5 opportunities at the GS-15 level and 8 at the GS-14 level.** This will help reduce the total number of positions at the GS-14/15 levels, reshape our grade-level structure and increase our supervisory to staff ratio.

NOTE: Given the pool of available candidates in our supervisory ranks, if Region 4 does not receive applicants at the numbers listed above for either the GS-15 or GS-14 levels, we request the flexibility to increase (or decrease) the number in one or the other category, as long as our total reduction does not exceed a total of 13.

2. Reduce our Number of Non-Supervisory GS-14/15 Positions

Previous regional workforce planning efforts have resulted in 52 non-supervisory GS-14 and 15 staff positions in Technical Expert or Senior Advisor positions across all Region 4 divisions. An assessment of regional priorities has resulted in a need for us to re-evaluate these positions to ensure optimum utilization. We will use target administrative positions in the 0301 occupational series that are no longer critical given changing mission requirements and workforce reshaping efforts. There are a total of 29 employees currently in this occupational series. Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, the region will reassign any remaining complex, mission critical work to existing higher-graded positions (GS-13 and 14) in order to concentrate the assignment of this work into fewer positions. The less complex work will be restructured into lower-graded GS-7/9/11 positions with promotion potential established at the GS-12/13 level. This will allow us to recruit entry-level technical candidates interested in working on program and technical issues that require the integration of multimedia approaches and new technology skills to more efficiently and effectively implement program objectives, rather than solely relying on regional and/or national level experts in specific fields. While some non-supervisory higher-graded positions will remain, this will help to create a more grade-level balanced workforce in the region.

Regional program priorities have evolved over time based, in part, on executive leadership direction and specific knowledge of a particular sector, program or pollutant that supported the higher grade at one point. This need no longer exists in some areas, or does not exist in an amount sufficient to support a stand-alone, highly graded position. Additionally, it is critical as a part of our human capital planning to develop staff with multi-media experience and move from a 1 person/1 program mentality to greater cross-training and work-sharing that will allow us to better meet our mission regardless of where short or long-term vacancies arise. We want to develop employees with a high degree of collaboration and self-management skills, with an ability to apply their degrees/technical backgrounds to a variety of situations. **As a result, we plan to reduce the number of positions in this category by 5 positions in Atlanta and West Palm Beach, FL.**

3. Reduce our Number of Support Positions

Reduce and restructure work of GS-0028 Environmental Protection Specialists (EPS) positions. Region 4 currently has 67 employees in this administrative occupational series. We expect Agency efficiencies projected in FY 2014 and 2015 to result in enhanced business processes that will create the need to restructure the work in these positions (e.g., the work being done in grants management practices for those with Project Officer responsibility). Additionally, we will achieve staffing reductions to restructure these positions to recruit technical candidates with the new skills needed to expand our analytical capabilities and approaches so that we more effectively support decision makers and accomplish mission critical, highly technical functions.

Evolving technology, business processes and efficiencies have changed and will continue to change the way the Region accomplishes its administrative workload. The agency has moved to performing tasks electronically rather than by circulating paper documents, thus cutting down processing time for our administrative functions significantly. **We are projecting to reduce the number of positions in this category by 8 positions in Atlanta and Durham, NC.** As positions are vacated in this category, we will use FTE to recruit staff into technical positions (i.e., Environmental Scientists, Physical Scientists, and Life Scientists) to better support mission critical needs in the Region.

NOTE: Given the pool of available candidates in the 0301 and 0028 series, if Region 4 does not receive applicants at the numbers listed above (i.e., 5 for non-supervisory GS-14/15s and 8 for EPS positions) we request the flexibility to increase (or decrease) the number in one or the other category, as long as our total does not exceed 13.

2. Identify the end date for separations under VSIP and VERA.

Provide the end date for the authorities as well as the final date for employees to separate from the agency's employment roles.

The time period for the authorities is from the date of approval until April 30, 2014. Voluntary separations will occur by April 4, 2014.

Required information for VSIP request

3. Identify the specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position, such as skills and knowledge gaps.

We plan to offer 13 VERA/VSIP opportunities to supervisors in all occupational categories listed in Table 4. In addition, we will offer a total of 13 VERA/VSIP to non-supervisory GS-0301 positions at the GS-14/15 levels and to employees in GS-0028 Environmental Protection Specialist positions at all grade levels.

4. Describe the categories of employees who will be offered VSIP by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position such as skills or knowledge gaps, or retirement eligibility.

This should be a description of all groups of employees who will receive VSIP offers. The agency should use categories such as position titles, occupational series, grade levels or function(s) performed (e.g., maintenance workers, support staff, etc.). The request should also specify the geographic area(s) where the employees are located.

We plan to offer VERA/VSIP in occupational categories:

- **Supervisory positions: Total of 13 opportunities** (5 at the GS-15 level; and 8 at the GS-14 level) (in Atlanta and Athens)

NOTE: Given the pool of available candidates in our supervisory ranks, if Region 4 does not receive at least 5 applicants at the GS-15 level and 8 at the GS-14 level, we request the flexibility to increase (or decrease) the number in one or the other category, as long as our total reduction does not exceed a total of 13.

- **Non-supervisory positions: Total of 5 opportunities** - GS-0301 positions at the GS-14/15 levels (in Atlanta and West Palm Beach, FL)
- **Environmental Protection Specialists: Total of 8 opportunities** - all grade levels (in Atlanta and Durham, NC).

NOTE: Given the pool of available candidates in the 0301 and 0028 series, if Region 4 does not receive the number of targeted opportunities in each of the last two categories, but receives a larger number in one or the other, we request the flexibility to increase the number in one or the other, but not exceed a total of 13 in both categories.

5. Identify the number of VSIPs to be paid and the maximum amount of each VSIP (up to \$25,000).

Region 4 has identified 26 targeted positions. The maximum number of VSIPs to be offered is 26. The maximum amount that will be paid is \$25,000.

The separation incentive payment will be based upon the standard severance pay calculation. Therefore, the amount of the separation incentive (buyout) payment will be an amount equal to the employee's calculated severance pay entitlement or \$25,000, whichever is less.

6. Describe how the organization will operate without the eliminated positions and functions identified in number 1.

In Region 4's supervisory ranks, we will reduce the number of branch and section level positions (GS-14 and 15) and realign or reassign staff as needed to accommodate these reductions. A future planned reorganization will incorporate these reductions and could result in additional reductions.

Reductions in non-supervisory, administrative GS-14/15 positions will allow us to consolidate some of our higher graded work in remaining 14/15 positions and also redistribute some of the less complex work to lower graded GS-12/13 positions.

Finally, for work being performed by Environmental Protection Specialist positions, we believe operational efficiencies and business process improvements will reduce the need for the number currently in our workforce.

Region 4 anticipates a modest replacement plan (approximately one hire for every three vacancies, assuming all 26 VERA/VSIPs are utilized) will be implemented. The goal is to achieve a more highly technical and grade-level balanced workforce with the skills needed to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges. We will also create a more balanced supervisor-to-employee ratio.

7. Provide a proposed organization chart showing the expected changes to the organization's structure after completing the VSIP plan.

This chart should show the agency (or component within the agency, if the VSIP request is for a single component) minus the eliminated or restructured or redescribed positions (different grade, title, function(s), etc.). In order to effectively show the meaning of this information, it would be useful to display a current organization chart as well.

(See Figure 1)

The proposed FY 2014 VERA/VSIP plan will not result in changes to the current Region 4 organization chart. However, the overall number of Region 4 administrative employees will be reduced to meet the technical skill set needed to meet today and tomorrow's challenges, while increasing our supervisor to staff ratio.

8. If requesting, or will request, VERA, describe how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

This discussion should explain the extent to which the agency believes it will reach its voluntary separation goals by combining VERA with VSIP as an enticement for voluntary separation. If the agency believes the VERA, when used with VSIP may entice certain employees to retire early to receive a VSIP, it should provide that information and explain the anticipated, positive effect that VERA will have on the VSIP acceptance rate.

Region 4 has a substantial number of employees eligible for optional retirement and an even higher number of VERA-eligible employees. Given the fact that many of our optional retirement-eligible employees have continued to work years beyond retirement eligibility, we are requesting authority to

offer VERA with VSIP to supplement our number in order to reach our goal of 26 voluntary separations in FY 2014.

Offering VERA with VSIP is more appealing than VERA alone and most likely will help us achieve the voluntary separations needed to restructure the grade levels of our workforce and gain the technical skill sets needed to meet current and future mission needs.

9. If offering VSIPs under another statutory authority, describe how VSIPs are being used under that authority.

Not applicable.

Required information for VERA request

10. Provide the anticipated effective date of the substantial delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping described in number 1.

(Note: The date provided should not be earlier than the ending date provided in number 2)

Reshaping will occur after May 2, 2014.

11. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s).

Region 4 currently employs 961 permanent employees.

12. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the reason(s) in number 1.

For example, if you are requesting VERA based on a need to reshape your workforce to correct skills imbalances, you will likely experience voluntary separations, reassignments, and reclassifications. The sum of these anticipated actions is the number we're seeking.

We expect to process at least 50+ personnel actions (voluntary separations, reassignments, details, reclassifications, and internal/external recruitments) to implement the reshaping of our workforce, restructure our grade levels and reduce the overall number of positions in the region to meet FY 2014 staff levels.

13. Provide the total number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are eligible for voluntary early retirement. (Do not include employees eligible for optional retirement.)

79

14. Provide an estimate of the number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to take voluntary early retirement.

10 - 15

15. Describe the types of personnel actions anticipated as a result of the reason(s) in number 1 (e.g., reassignments, downgrades, separations) that would occur without VERA.

- Directed reassignments
- Details
- Voluntary separations
- Abolish or Reclassify positions
- Internal and external recruitment

Figure 1 – Current Organization Chart

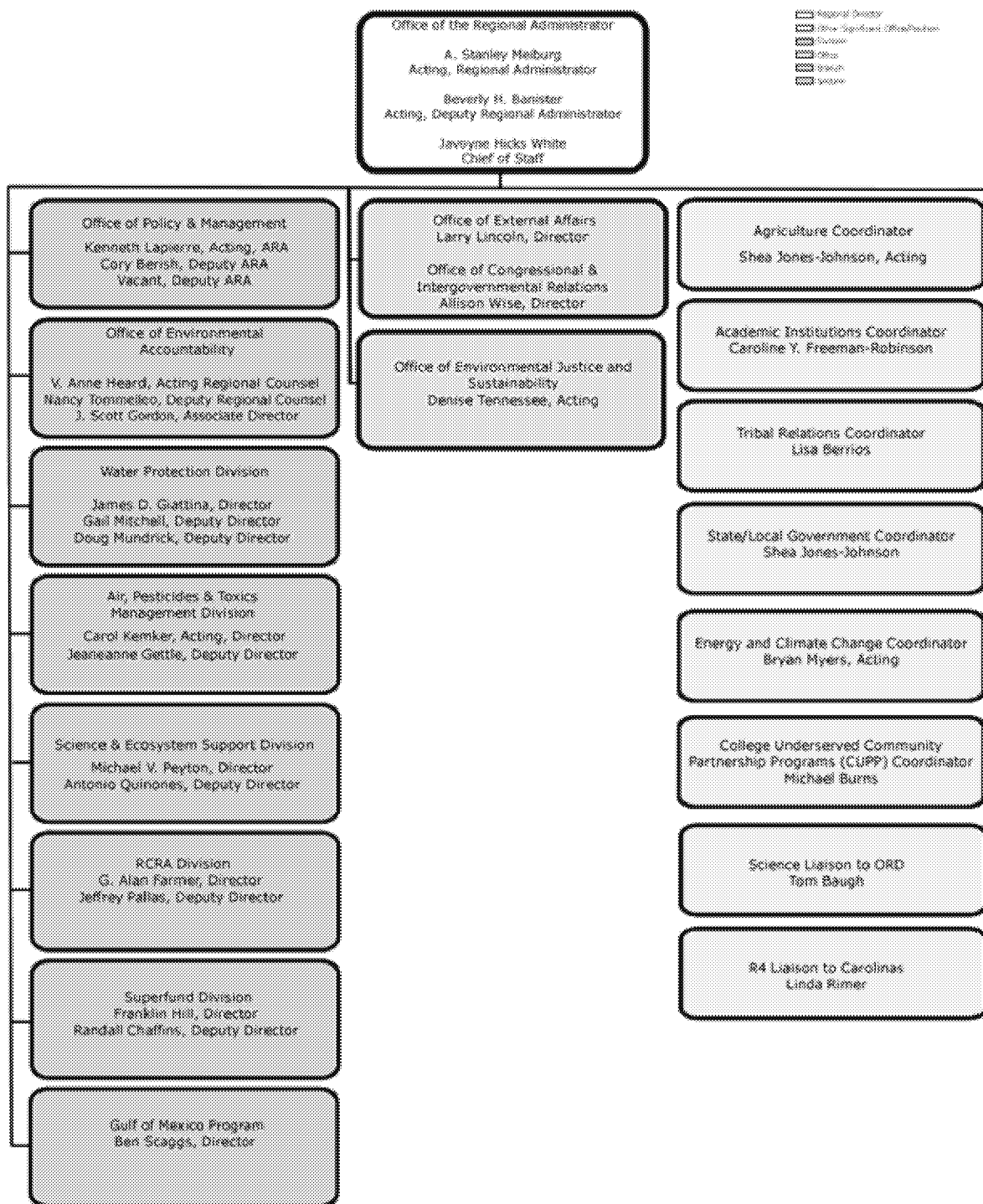


Table 1 – Summary of Targeted Positions

Targeted Positions	Retirement Eligible (VSIP)	Early Retirement Eligible (VERA/VSIP)	Resignation (VSIP)	Total Onboard as of 12/9/13	Maximum # of VERA/VSIP Offers
Non-supervisory GS-14/15 - 0301 Series	6	8	13	27	Up to 5
Supervisor (all series)	25	47	35	107	Up to 13
Environmental Protection Specialist – 0028 Series	16	24	27	67	Up to 8
Grand Total	47	79	75	201	26

Table 2 – Summary of Targeted Positions by Duty Station

Targeted Positions/Duty Station	Retirement Eligible (VSIP)	Early Retirement Eligible (VERA/VSIP)	Resignation (VSIP)	Total Onboards as of 12/9/13	Maximum # of VERA/VSIP Offers
Non-supervisory GS-14/15 - 0301 Series	6	8	13	27	Up to 5
Atlanta, GA Total	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			26	4
West Palm Beach, FL Total				1	1
Supervisor (all series)	25	47	35	107	Up to 13
Athens, GA Total	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			10	1
Atlanta, GA Total				97	12
Environmental Protection Specialist – 0028 Series	16	24	27	67	Up to 8
Athens, GA Total	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			1	0
Atlanta, GA Total				65	7
Durham, NC Total				1	1
Grand Total	47	79	75	201	26

Table 3 – Supervisor to Staff Ratio

Division	Leader		Staff	Grand Total	Manager / Supervisor to Permanent Employee Ratio	Leader to Permanent Employee Ratio
	SES	Manager / Supervisor				
APTMD	1	18	117	136	1 : 6.5	1 : 6
OEA	1	13	104	118	1 : 8	1 : 7
OPM	1	17	109	127	1 : 6.4	1 : 6
ORA	3	3	48	54	1 : 16	1 : 8
RCRA	1	11	80	92	1 : 7.3	1 : 7
SESD	1	13	77	91	1 : 5.9	1 : 6
SFD	1	23	153	177	1 : 6.7	1 : 6
WPD	1	23	156	180	1 : 6.8	1 : 7
Grand Total	10	121	844	975*	1 : 7	1 : 6.4

*Note: Grand total includes 12 vacancies plus the RA and ARA positions for a total of 14.

Table 4 – Targeted Supervisory Positions and Maximum Number that are Eligible for VERA/VSIPs

Grade/ Title	Retirement Eligible (VSIP)	Early Retirement Eligible (VERA/VSIP)	Resignation (VSIP)	Total Onboards as of 12/9/13
GM-15	2	0	0	2
Program Management Officer	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			1
Supervisory Environmental Scientist				1
GM-14				1
Supervisory Environmental Engineer				1
GS-14	13	20	26	59
Equal Employment Manager	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			1
Program Management Officer				14
Supervisory Budget Analyst				1
Supervisory Environmental Engineer				18
Supervisory Environmental Scientist				4
Supervisory Financial Specialist				1
Supervisory Grants Management Specialist				1
Supervisory Information Management Specialist				1
Supervisory IT Specialist				1
Supervisory Life Scientist				4
Supervisory Physical Scientist				9
Supervisory Program Analyst				1
Supervisory Program Management Coordinator				1
Supervisory Toxicologist				1
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist				1
GS-15	10	26	9	45
Deputy Director	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			2
Financial Manager				1
Grants Management Officer				1
Program Management Officer				15
Supervisory Attorney-Adviser				7
Supervisory Environmental Engineer				10
Supervisory Environmental Scientist				1
Supervisory Human Resource Specialist				1
Supervisory Life Scientist				3
Supervisory Physical Scientist				3
Supervisory Public Affairs Specialist				1
Grand Total	25	47	35	107*

Note: This number does not include supervisory vacancies, Commissioned Corps supervisor, or the Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Program Office.

Table 5 – Targeted Non-Supervisory Positions (0301 Series) and Maximum Number that are Eligible for VERA/VSIPs

Grade/ Title	Retirement Eligible (VSIP)	Early Retirement Eligible (VERA/VSIP)	Resignation (VSIP)	Total Onboards as of 12/9/13
GS-09	0	1	2	3
Administrative Specialist	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			2
FOIA and Records Management Specialist				1
GS-11	1	0	1	2
Executive Assistant	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			1
Freedom Of Information Specialist				1
GS-12	0	6	3	9
Freedom Of Information Specialist	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			6
Information Management Specialist				1
Program Support Specialist				2
GS-13				1
Records Management Specialist				1
GS-14	0	1	2	3
Regional Diversity Manager	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			1
Special Assistant				1
Superfund Information Analyst				1
GS-15	5	0	4	9
Congressional Liaison Specialist	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy			1
Program Advisor				1
Program Management Specialist				1
RCRA Program Advisor				1
Senior Advisor				4
Special Assistant				1
Grand Total	6	8	13	27

Table 6 - Targeted Environmental Protection Specialist Positions (0028 Series) and Maximum Number that are Eligible for VERA/VSIPs

Grade	Retirement Eligible (VSIP)	Early Retirement Eligible (VERA/VSIP)	Resignation (VSIP)	Total Onboards as of 12/9/13
GS-09	0	1	1	2
GS-11	3	11	2	16
GS-12	4	7	16	27
GS-13	5	5	4	14
GS-14	4	0	4	8
Grand Total	16	24	27	67



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Request for
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority
and
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments
for
Region 7**

- I. Introduction**
- II. Background**
- III. Reshaping the Workforce**
- IV. Budget Neutrality/Costs/Savings**
- V. Combined VERA/VSIP Request**

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Current Organization Chart

**Attachment 2 – Targeted Positions and Maximum Number of VERAs/VSIPs to be
Offered to Targeted Positions in All Occupational Series**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 7
Voluntary Early Retirement Authority
and
Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments**

I. Introduction

In accordance with Section 1313(b) of the Chief Human Capital Officer's Act of 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 7 is requesting approval authority through April 30, 2014 for the use of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA/Early-Out) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP/Buy-Out). Region 7 will use these authorities in four focused areas to:

- Reduce and reshape our Environmental Program positions in occupational series GS-028, GS-301, GS-340, GS-343, GS-401, GS-408, GS-690, GS-808, GS-819, GS-1301, GS-1320, and GS-1340 at the GS-12 through GS-15 grade levels, supervisory and non-supervisory positions, across all divisions and geographic locations within Region 7 to meet our changing mission requirements and move to new models of work.
- Reduce and reshape our Attorney Advisor and Paralegal positions in occupational series GS-905 at the GS-14 and GS-15 grade levels and GS-950 at the GS-12 grade levels, supervisory and non-supervisory positions, in the Office of Regional Counsel in the Kansas and Missouri offices to provide greater support of multimedia approaches.
- Reduce and reshape our Regional Programmatic Support positions in occupations series GS-201, GS-301, GS-340, GS-342, GS-343, GS-501, GS-505, GS-510, GS-1035, GS-1084, GS-1101, GS-1109, GS-1160, GS-1410, and GS-2210 at the GS-11 through GS-15 grade levels, supervisory and non-supervisory positions, across all divisions within the Kansas and Missouri offices to more efficiently and effectively implement program objectives.
- Reduce and reshape our Regional Administrative Support positions in occupational series GS-029, GS-301, GS-318, and GS-2005 at the GS-6 through GS-10 grade levels, non-supervisory positions, across all divisions in the Kansas offices to better align with current and projected workload needs.

Over time, there has been a significant increase of non-supervisory high-graded positions (i.e., GS-13 through GS-15) in Region 7. In reviewing the region's workforce demographics, we have determined that there is a severe imbalance between the number of positions at the GS-13, GS-14 and GS-15 levels compared to the number of positions in which the full performance level is limited to the GS-12 level. Over 68% of the region's 522 employees are grades 13 and above. Of the 128 employees eligible for VERA, 87% are in the GS-13 through GS-15 grade levels. Of the 98 employees eligible for Regular Retirement, 82% are in the GS-13 through GS-15 grade

levels. The change in program priorities of the Agency and the Region has decreased the need for many specialized non-supervisory positions. The work of the non-supervisory positions can be consolidated, eliminated, or redistributed to lower-graded positions.

In addition, the current average ratio of supervisors to staff in Region 7 is 1:6.9, with variations in individual offices that range from 1:5 to 1:9. There are 68 supervisory GS-13 through GS-15 positions (7 are attorneys). There are 293 non-supervisory GS-13 through GS-15 positions (34 are attorneys). The reduction of supervisory positions will allow reshaping of the workforce in order to create a greater balance in the supervisor to staff ratio.

Region 7's low attrition rate, around 4%, will not generate enough attrition to create a sufficient number of vacancies to rebalance and reshape our workforce. In order to avoid the use of more drastic authorities (i.e., Reduction in Force), Region 7 would like to utilize VERA and VSIP to reach the mandated reduction level of full time employee equivalents.

Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, there will be fewer higher graded positions and the most complex work (i.e., GS-13 level and above) will be reassigned to remaining higher graded positions in order to concentrate this work into fewer positions. Given the number of experienced employees that are expected to remain on board after the VERA and VSIP is completed, the region would recruit a modest number of entry level positions with the full promotion potential to the GS-12 level, consistent with overall future workforce projections for the less complex work. In addition to creating more workforce balance between higher and lower graded positions, the new, entry level employees are expected to introduce more diversity, enhanced integration of multimedia approaches and advanced technology skills to more efficiently and effectively implement program objectives.

Targeting decisions were made by senior managers based on the specific mission needs required to reshape the Region 7 workforce. Decisions on who receives VERA and VSIP will be prioritized based upon the employee's permanent official position of record, occupational series, grade level, and official Service Computation Date, with preference given to those with the highest years of combined service at the EPA should two or more applicants within a VERA and VSIP eligible category have the same Service Computation Date.

Region 7's goal is to reduce the overall workforce from 522 permanent employees to 488 permanent employees for FY 2015. Both VERA and VSIP opportunities will be offered to up to 70 employees in designated occupations and grade levels within Region 7. In the designated occupational series and grade levels there are 475 permanent employees eligible to apply for VSIP and 128 employees eligible for VERA opportunities.

II. Background

As of December 2013, Region 7 employs 522 permanent employees responsible for carrying out the EPA's environmental and human health mission with the cooperation of four states (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska) and nine federally recognized Tribes. For all of EPA's congressionally mandated programs, the region oversees State and Tribal activities for conformance with law and regulation, and also independently conducts federal rulemaking,

permitting, inspections, enforcement, grant administration and public outreach to compel compliance, protect human health and restore environmental conditions.

Region 7 is organizationally divided into Divisions and Offices as shown in the current organization chart, Attachment 1. The Office of Regional Administrator is responsible for the execution of all regional programs of the Agency. The “media” divisions (Air and Waste Management Division, Superfund Division and the Water Wetlands and Pesticides Division) are assigned responsibility for implementing environmental regulatory statutes (i.e., Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Resources Conversation and Recovery Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensations and Liability Act, Federal Insecticide, Fungicide & Rodenticide Act, Toxics Substance Control Act, National Environmental Policy Act and the Oil Pollution Act). The Environmental Services Division is responsible for providing a broad spectrum of scientific and technical services to other Region 7 divisions/programs and State and Local agencies. The other offices - Office of Regional Counsel, Enforcement Coordination Office, Office of Policy and Management, Office of Public Affairs and the Office of Tribal Affairs – are responsible for programs that also cross divisional boundaries.

In reviewing the region's workforce demographics, there is a significant imbalance between the number of positions at the GS-13, GS-14 and GS-15 levels compared to the number of positions with full performance level to the GS-12 level. To rebalance the organizational grade levels, Region 7 requests approval to offer VERA and VSIP to eligible employees. As described in the next section, this authority will be used to reduce and reshape our workforce to create a grade level balance that consolidates higher level work into fewer positions and creates a modest number of new positions in order to replace obsolete skills at a savings to the region.

III. Reshaping the Workforce

To build a high performing organization that is flatter, faster and more fluid, Region 7 needs to reduce and rebalance grade levels and restructure our workforce to recruit the new skills and abilities needed to work across media/programs, support priority work in areas such as Communities, implementing the Next Generation Compliance Strategy, enhancing Partnerships with our stakeholders and incorporating principles of Sustainability into our programs (e.g., green infrastructure). A prime example, the Next Generation Compliance Strategy, will require new technical and legal skills to meet the demands of optimizing use of new monitoring technologies, working with communities and community-collected information on local sources and impacts, and developing/using innovative enforcement approaches to improve compliance. This paradigm shift also impacts the Region’s regulatory and permitting personnel who must assist states in adopting/issuing more effective regulations and permits that are easier to implement and enforce, utilize advanced emissions monitoring and electronic reporting, including requiring information to be publically available. Finally, continued advancement in automation/IT technologies will foster further streamlining and redefine our work, allowing people to manage workloads more effectively and with greater consistency.

Taken together, these drivers, along with the budget realities, require Region 7 to reduce, rebalance and restructure our overall workforce in a manner not possible through current attrition rates, which have averaged about 4%. Regional employees, consistent with Agency-wide data, remain five years past their retirement eligible date on average.

VERA/VSIP authority will be used to reduce, reshape and rebalance Region 7's workforce to provide more balanced supervisory to staff ratios, grade level structure, and needed skills. Higher level work would be consolidated into fewer positions and create a modest number of new entry level positions in order to bring in new skills to more efficiently and effectively accomplish environmental program objectives at a savings to the region.

Region 7 would reduce the total number of positions at the GS-13 and above grade levels and subsequently consolidate some management positions and reassign the higher graded work into existing non-supervisory GS-13 or higher employees, and restructure the remaining work into new positions with GS-12 established as the full performance level. There will be fewer supervisors and fewer non-supervisory GS-13 and above positions and more employees employed in program and support positions that lead to a GS-12 full performance level. Region 7 would replace obsolete skill sets in lower graded positions that are no longer needed with skill sets needed to meet challenges today and in the future.

For lower graded work, Region 7 would advertise and recruit positions externally at the GS-7/9 level with full promotion potential set at the GS-12 grade level. Hiring new employees at the entry-level will allow Region 7 to more evenly balance the grade level of our workforce between the GS-13 grade level and positions established with a full promotion potential to the GS-12 grade level. Also, it will allow recruitment of candidates with advanced technology and multi-media planning skills needed to support regional priorities and the agency's Next Generation Compliance Strategy.

Information regarding each of the targeted categories is provided below:

- Environmental Program Occupations: To meet our changing mission requirements and create a high performing organization that is flatter, faster and more fluid, positions that provide program support to the Environmental Programs need to be reduced and reshaped. Positions in this category include GS-028, GS-301, GS-340, GS-343, GS-401, GS-408, GS-690, GS-808, GS-819, GS-1301, GS-1320, and GS-1340 at the GS-12 through GS-15 grade levels. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to both supervisory and non-supervisory GS-12 and above positions to achieve an overall Region-wide reduction and reshaping of the workforce. Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, the region will reassign the most complex work (i.e., GS-13 level and above) to existing higher graded positions in order to concentrate the assignment of this work into fewer positions. The less complex work will be restructured into lower-graded entry level positions with promotion potential established to the GS-12 level. Reshaping will occur, in part, through consolidation of some management positions and a reduction of some, but not all, non-supervisory positions at higher grade levels. This will allow us to recruit entry-level candidates interested in working on program and technical issues that require the integration of multimedia approaches and new technology skills to more efficiently and

effectively implement program objectives, rather than a sole reliance on regional and/or national level experts in specific fields. While some non-supervisory higher graded positions will remain, this will create a more grade-level balanced workforce in the region with the skill set to meet current and future challenges. Reshaping will also occur by retraining the remaining scientists and engineers with the new skills and competencies needed to support the strategic goals and priorities of the region. The retraining will allow the region to redeploy them region-wide, creating a leaner workforce with greater inter-connectivity, a leaner organizational framework in which we can more efficiently accomplish the mission of the Agency, and integrate multi-media approaches along with new technology to more efficiently and effectively accomplish environmental program objectives.

- Attorney-Advisor and Paralegal Occupations: The region will use these authorities to reduce and reshape the Attorney-Advisor and Paralegal positions. Positions in this category include GS-905 and GS-950. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to up to twelve (12) supervisory and non-supervisory Attorney Advisor GS-14 and GS-15 level positions, and we plan to target three (3) Paralegal GS-12 level positions. Reshaping will occur, in part, through potential consolidation of some management positions and a reduction of some, but not all, non-supervisory positions at higher grade levels. Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, the region will, in part, reassign the most complex work to existing higher graded positions in order to concentrate the assignment of this work into fewer positions. The less complex work will be permanently restructured into lower-graded positions. Overall, the region intends to backfill a smaller number of positions, consistent with our overall future workforce projections. Several of the backfill positions will be offered as rotating term limit positions at the entry level for Attorney-Advisors, which will create a long-term more diverse workforce profile to handle less complex work at the GS-11 level. Finally, the limited attorney hires will also be focused on a different skill set supporting multimedia approaches, greater use of technology in discovery, FOIA, evidence gathering and communications, and more comprehensive settlements as opposed to individual rule violations. In the legal support area, the need for Paralegals in our Office of Regional Counsel's branches, where all of Region 7's paralegal employees are located, has changed since these positions were established. There is more emphasis now and going forward on document production and file management, and less on legal research on the part of the paralegals.
- Regional Programmatic Support Occupations: To meet our changing mission requirements and create a high performing organization that is flatter, faster and more fluid, positions that provide program support to the Environmental Programs need to be reduced and reshaped. The establishment of centralized shared service centers and the implementation of several systems have reduced the number of program support positions required in the Region. Positions in this category includes GS-201, GS-301, GS-340, GS-342, GS-343, GS-501, GS-505, GS-510, GS-1035, GS-1084, GS-1101, GS-1109, GS-1160, GS-1410, and GS- 2210 at the GS-11 through GS-15 grade levels. In order to meet the changing mission support requirements and move to new models of work in alignment with future resource levels, reshaping will occur through modest

recruitment of entry level positions with advanced technology skills needed to expand database information sharing among internal and multi-agency external system users and to communicate in social media arenas, as well as advanced analytical skills to assess agency progress and system capabilities to support decision makers in more efficiently and effectively determining strategic program plans. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to supervisory and non-supervisory positions in the target occupations at the GS-11 and above, with the following exception: we plan to target up to five (5) Information Technology Specialist positions. The IT Security 2210 position is excluded from the targeted population.

- Regional Administrative Support Occupations: The region will use these authorities to reduce and reshape our regional administrative support positions as their role has changed significantly in the past decade with changing technology and the decentralization of many functions previously performed by secretaries to the professional staff (typing, travel, time keeping, etc.). Positions in this category include GS-029, GS-301, GS-318, and GS-2005 at the GS-6 through GS-10 grade levels. Over this time, Region 7 has pursued several strategies aimed at addressing the changing nature of the work and perceived career limitations with these positions. Challenges remain, however, in terms of identifying sufficient grade-appropriate work to support full time positions for each organizational level. We believe modest rehiring will meet our needs, while preserving budgetary flexibility. This will allow us to more effectively structure the proper number and grades to support continuity and the higher level support functions. Ultimately, depending on certain factors such as the future of telework, social media, advanced IT tools, the size of our workforce, etc., the Region will either pursue additional administrative support consolidation scenarios, or at the very least will continue to consolidate full time EPA employee administrative support work into fewer positions. The administrative skills that the region requires in today's work environment include project tracking, software proficiency for report development and database management, meeting planning and scheduling, coordination, and sophisticated electronic formatting of documents. To address the change, Region 7 would like to use VERA/VSIP authorities to reduce the number of secretarial positions, provide for modest hiring to bring employees on board with the skills described above. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to non-supervisory GS-6 and above positions.

In summary, Region 7 plans to use VERA and VSIP to reduce and restructure the regional workforce through a multi-pronged approach:

- reduce the overall workforce from 522 permanent (FTE) employees to 488 for FY 2015,
- reduce the overall number of supervisory and non-supervisory positions in the Region at higher grade levels (GS-13 and above),
- consolidate some higher graded duties, and
- address the changing nature of workforce skill requirements.

Each voluntary separation created through the use of the VERA and VSIP authority will be carefully evaluated, with an overall goal of ensuring that staffing levels for Region 7 do not exceed FY 2015 staffing level requirements. Consistent with the need for reshaping the workforce, there will likely be a need for some organizational changes within the Region resulting from staff losses and smaller supervisory ratios in the Region. While it will take substantial planning and analysis to determine how best to reshape the Region in FY 2015 and beyond, having fewer employees in highly specialized, higher graded, and/or supervisory positions and more employees in lower graded positions with interchangeable skill sets will allow the Region greater flexibility in reshaping the workforce to reflect our needs moving forward.

IV. Budget Neutrality/Costs/Savings

Budget Neutrality

This request for VERA and VSIP authority, if approved, will be conducted so that no funds or resources other than those appropriated for use in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 will be used or required.

As mandated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for early-out/buy-out requests generally, Region 7's request certifies that the early-out/buy-out will be budget neutral. That is, the early-out/buy-out authority will not result in any increased costs above current or future FY appropriations to pay for costs incurred for buy-out cash payments, annual leave cash payouts, or any other costs, including those associated with refilling the resulting vacancies.

The following tables detail calculations showing how Region 7 has assured budget neutrality in the proposal for FY 2014. The direct maximum costs associated with VERA and VSIP is \$2,705,416. Table A provides details of the direct costs associated with VERA and VSIP. Savings projected through FY 2016 as a result of the VERA and VSIP are estimated to be more than \$15 million. Table B provides the detailed calculations of the savings achieved in FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016. The savings will be used to meet Region 7's ongoing program goals and responsibilities.

Direct Costs

Table A - Direct Costs for VERA/VSIP	
Targeted Positions (See details in Attachment 3)	
70 Targeted Positions for VSIP X \$25,000 (maximum cash buy-out)	\$1,750,000
Annual Leave Buyout for 70 Targeted Positions for VERA, Optional Retirement or Resignation* (56.87 per hr. X 240) X 70	\$955,416
Total Maximum Direct Costs	\$2,705,416

Estimated Savings

Table B - Estimated Savings for FY 2014 through FY 2016			
	Estimated FY 2014 Savings	Estimated FY 2015 Savings	Estimated FY 2016 Savings
A. Total Annual Payroll Costs (before VERA/VSIP)**	\$64,983,500	\$64,983,500	\$64,983,500
B. Payroll Savings (Payroll for 240 VERA/VSIP targeted positions with April 4, 2014 Buyout Date with 49% of year remaining in 2014)*	-\$4,154,394	-\$8,308,787	-\$8,308,787
C. Working Capital Fund Savings***	-\$175,000	-\$350,000	-\$350,000
D. VSIP Buyout (\$25,000 X 70)	\$1,750,000		
E. Leave Payout Estimate (presumes 240 hours at average salary)*	\$955,416		
F. Payroll for 30 new hires****	\$227,750	\$1,518,366	\$1,822,0003
G. Working Capital Costs*** for 30 New Hires	\$18,750	\$125,000	\$150,000
Total Costs	\$63,606,023	\$57,968,049	\$58,296,716
Total Projected Savings with VERA/VSIP	\$1,377,477	\$7,015,451	\$6,686,784

Notes:

* Calculations are based on a GS-13, Step 5 in Lenexa, KS (Rest of the US). The GS-13 Step 5 salary cost was \$92,732 annually or \$44.43 per hour. We adjusted this upward by 28% to account for benefits and other costs bringing it to \$118,696 annually.

** Total FY 2013 Region 7 payroll includes furlough savings mandated by sequestration.

*** Working Capital Fund costs are based on \$5,000 per position per year for computer, telephone and internet access. FY14 hiring of 15, FY15 hiring of 25 and FY16 hiring of 30. Includes 30 hires (15 in FY14 and 15 in FY15) due to VERA/VSIP and 10 in FY15 and 30 in FY15 due to normal attrition.

****Calculations are based on GS-9 Step 1 in Lenexa, KS (Rest of the US). Annual salary is \$47,448. We adjusted this amount upward by 28% to account for benefits and other costs bringing it to \$60,733 annually. FY14 hiring of 15, FY15 hiring of 25 and FY16 hiring of 30. Includes 30 hires (15 in FY14 and 15 in FY15) due to VERA/VSIP and 10 in FY15 and 30 in FY15 due to normal attrition.

Total Estimated Hires of 30 is based upon difference of the On board strength at December 1, 2013 and on board strength estimated following 70 VERA/VSIP less the 2014 planning target of FTE.

Indirect Costs

The indirect costs are difficult to gauge because most are specific to the employee. Indirect cost such as security clearances are based on the position and employee. If the employee already has one the cost is reduced. Transit subsidy and parking are indirect costs that are employee specific and can only be determined after the employee has been recruited and tentatively selected.

V. Combined Request for Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP)

Agency: EPA

Covered Component(s): Region 7

VERA and VSIP

1. Explain the workforce situation the organization needs to address through VERA and VSIP that would otherwise require involuntary personnel actions, e.g., delaying, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping.

To build a high performing organization that is flatter, faster and more fluid, Region 7 needs to reduce and rebalance grade levels and restructure our workforce to recruit the new skills and abilities needed to work across media/programs, support priority work in areas such as communities, implementing the Next Generation Compliance Strategy, enhancing partnerships with our stakeholders and incorporating principles of sustainability into our programs (e.g., green infrastructure). A prime example, the Next Generation Compliance Strategy, will require new technical and legal skills to meet the demands of optimizing use of new monitoring technologies, working with communities and community-collected information on local sources and impacts, and developing/using innovative enforcement approaches to improve compliance. This paradigm shift also impacts the Region's regulatory and permitting personnel who must assist states in adopting/issuing more effective regulations and permits that are easier to implement and enforce, utilize advanced emissions monitoring and electronic reporting, including requiring information to be publically available. Finally, continued advancement in automation/IT technologies will foster further streamlining and redefine our work, allowing people to manage workloads more effectively and with greater consistency.

In reviewing the region's workforce demographics, there is a current imbalance between the number of positions at the GS-13, GS-14 and GS-15 levels versus the number of positions with full performance level to the GS-12 level. To reshape the organizational grade levels, Region 7 requests approval to offer VERA and VSIP to eligible employees to reduce and reshape our workforce to create a grade level balance that consolidates higher level work into fewer positions and creates a modest number of new entry level positions in order to bring new skills at a savings to the region.

Region 7's goal is to reduce the overall workforce from 522 permanent employees to 488 employees for FY 2015. A total of 70 separations are targeted under VERA/VSIP, with an estimated target of 30 new hires mostly in positions with a career ladder to GS-12.

Region 7 plans to use VERA and VSIP to reshape our workforce to accomplish the following:

- Environmental Program Occupations: To meet our changing mission requirements and create a high performing organization that is flatter, faster and more fluid, positions that provide program support to the Environmental Programs need to be reduced and reshaped. Positions in this category include GS-028, GS-301, GS-340, GS-343, GS-401, GS-408, GS-690, GS-808, GS-819, GS-1301, GS-1320, and GS-1340 at the GS-12 through GS-15 grade levels. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to both supervisory and non-supervisory GS-12 and above positions to achieve an overall Region-wide reduction and reshaping of the workforce. Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, the region will reassign the most complex work (i.e., GS-13 level and above) to existing higher graded positions in order to concentrate the assignment of this work into fewer positions. The less complex work will be restructured into lower-graded entry level positions with promotion potential established to the GS-12 level. Reshaping will occur, in part, through consolidation of some management positions and a reduction of some, but not all, non-supervisory positions at higher grade levels. This will allow us to recruit entry-level candidates interested in working on program and technical issues that require the integration of multimedia approaches and new technology skills to more efficiently and effectively implement program objectives, rather than a sole reliance on regional and/or national level experts in specific fields. While some non-supervisory higher graded positions will remain, this will create a more grade-level balanced workforce in the region with the skill set to meet current and future challenges. Reshaping will also occur by retraining the remaining scientists and engineers with the new skills and competencies needed to support the strategic goals and priorities of the region. The retraining will allow the region to redeploy them region-wide, creating a leaner workforce with greater inter-connectivity, a leaner organizational framework in which we can more efficiently accomplish the mission of the Agency, and integrate multi-media approaches along with new technology to more efficiently and effectively accomplish environmental program objectives.
- Attorney-Advisor and Paralegal Occupations: The region will use these authorities to reduce and reshape the Attorney-Advisor and Paralegal positions. Positions in this category include GS-905 and GS-950. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to up to twelve (12) supervisory and non-supervisory Attorney Advisor GS-14 and GS-15 level positions, and we plan to target three (3) Paralegal GS-12 level positions. Reshaping will occur, in part, through potential consolidation of some management positions and a reduction of some, but not all, non-supervisory positions at higher grade levels. Through attrition gained by VERA and VSIP, the region will, in part, reassign the most complex work to existing higher graded positions in order to concentrate the assignment of this work into fewer positions. The less complex work will be permanently restructured into lower-graded positions. Overall, the region intends to backfill a smaller number of positions, consistent with our overall future workforce projections. Several of the

backfill positions will be offered as rotating term limit positions at the entry level for Attorney-Advisors, which will create a long-term more diverse workforce profile to handle less complex work at the GS-11 level. Finally, the limited attorney hires will also be focused on a different skill set supporting multimedia approaches, greater use of technology in discovery, FOIA, evidence gathering and communications, and more comprehensive settlements as opposed to individual rule violations. In the legal support area, the need for paralegals in our Office of Regional Counsel's branches, where all of Region 7's paralegal employees are located, has changed since these positions were established. There is more emphasis now and going forward on document production and file management, and less on legal research on the part of the paralegals.

- Regional Programmatic Support Occupations: To meet our changing mission requirements and create a high performing organization that is flatter, faster and more fluid, positions that provide program support to the environmental programs need to be reduced and reshaped. The establishment of centralized shared service centers and the implementation of several systems have reduced the number of program support positions required in the Region. Positions in this category includes GS-201, GS-301, GS-340, GS-342, GS-343, GS-501, GS-505, GS-510, GS-1035, GS-1084, GS-1101, GS-1109, GS-1160, GS-1410, and GS- 2210 at the GS-11 through GS-15 grade levels. In order to meet the changing mission support requirements and move to new models of work in alignment with future resource levels, reshaping will occur through modest recruitment of entry level positions with advanced technology skills needed to expand database information sharing among internal and multi-agency external system users and to communicate in social media arenas, as well as advanced analytical skills to assess agency progress and system capabilities to support decision makers in more efficiently and effectively determining strategic program plans. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to supervisory and non-supervisory positions in the target occupations at the GS-11 and above, with the following exception: we plan to target up to five (5) Information Technology Specialist positions. The IT Security 2210 position is excluded from the targeted population.
- Regional Administrative Support Occupations: The region will use these authorities to reduce and reshape our regional administrative support positions as their role has changed significantly in the past decade with changing technology and the decentralization of many functions previously performed by secretaries to the professional staff (typing, travel, time keeping, etc.). Positions in this category include GS-029, GS-301, GS-318, and GS-2005 at the GS-6 through GS-10 grade levels. Over this time, Region 7 has pursued several strategies aimed at addressing the changing nature of the work and perceived career limitations with these positions. Challenges remain, however, in terms of identifying sufficient grade-appropriate work to support full time positions for each organizational level. We believe modest rehiring will meet our needs, while preserving budgetary flexibility. This will allow us to more effectively structure the proper number and grades to support continuity and the higher level support functions. Ultimately, depending on certain factors such as the future of telework, social media, advanced IT tools, the size of our workforce, etc., the Region will either pursue additional administrative support consolidation scenarios, or at the very least will continue to

consolidate full time EPA employee administrative support work into fewer positions. The administrative skills that the region requires in today's work environment include project tracking, software proficiency for report development and database management, meeting planning and scheduling, coordination, and sophisticated electronic formatting of documents. To address the change, Region 7 would like to use VERA/VSIP authorities to reduce the number of secretarial positions, provide for modest hiring to bring employees on board with the skills described above. The VERA and VSIP will be offered to non-supervisory GS-6 and above positions.

2. Identify the end date for separations under VERA and VSIP.

The time period for the authorities is from the date of approval until April 30, 2014. Voluntary separations will occur by April 4, 2014.

Required information for VSIP request

3. Identify the specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position, such as skills and knowledge gaps.

Environmental Program Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to supervisory and non-supervisory GS-0028 Environmental Protection Specialists, the GS-0301 Miscellaneous & Program and the GS-0340 Program Management series, GS-0343 Management & Program Analysts, GS-0401 Life Scientists, GS-0408 Ecologists, GS-0690 Industrial Hygienists, GS-0808 Architects, GS-0819 Environmental Engineers, GS-1301 Environmental Scientists, GS-1320 Chemists, and GS-1340 Meteorologists at the GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 levels within Region 7 in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska.

Attorney Advisor and Paralegal Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to supervisory and non-supervisory GS-0905 Attorney-Advisers, and GS-0950 Paralegals at the GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, GS-15 levels within Region 7 in Kansas and Missouri.

Regional Programmatic Support Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to supervisory and non-supervisory GS-0201 Human Resource Specialists, the GS-0301 Miscellaneous & Program and the GS-0340 Program Management series, GS-0342 Support Services Specialists, GS-0501 Financial Management Specialists, GS-0505 Financial Managers, GS-0510 Accountants, GS-1035 Public Affairs Specialists, GS-1084 Visual Information Specialists, GS-1101 Small Business Utilization Specialists, GS-1109 Grants Management Specialists, GS-1160 Financial Analysts, GS-1410 Librarians, and GS-2210 Information Technology Specialists at the GS-11, GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 grade levels within Region 7 in Kansas and Missouri. The IT Security 2210 position is excluded from the targeted population.

Regional Administrative Support Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to non-supervisory GS-0029 Environmental Protection Assistants and the GS-0301 Miscellaneous and Program series, GS-0318 Secretary(s), and GS-2005 Supply Technicians at the GS-6, GS-7, GS-8, GS-9, and GS-10 grade levels within Region 7 in Kansas.

Attachment 2, VERA/VSIP shows allocations by occupational series within Region 7.

4. Describe the categories of employees who will be offered VSIP by organizational unit, geographical location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position such as skills or knowledge gaps, or retirement eligibility.

Environmental Program Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to supervisory and non-supervisory GS-0028 Environmental Protection Specialists and the GS-0301 Miscellaneous & Program series, GS-0340 Program Management Series, GS-0343 Management & Program Analysts, GS-0401 Life Scientists, GS-0408 Ecologists, GS-0690 Industrial Hygienists, GS-0808 Architects, GS-0819 Environmental Engineers, GS-1301 Environmental Scientists, GS-1320 Chemists, and GS-1340 Meteorologists at the GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 levels within Region 7 in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska.

Attorney Advisor and Paralegal Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to supervisory and non-supervisory GS-0905 Attorney-Advisers, and GS-0950 Paralegals at the GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, GS-15 levels within Region 7 in Kansas and Missouri.

Regional Programmatic Support Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to supervisory and non-supervisory GS-0201 Human Resource Specialists and the GS-0301 Miscellaneous & Program series, GS-0340 Program Management series, GS-0342 Support Services Specialists, GS-0501 Financial Management Specialists, GS-0505 Financial Managers, GS-0510 Accountants, GS-1035 Public Affairs Specialists, GS-1084 Visual Information Specialists, GS-1101 Small Business Utilization Specialists, GS-1109 Grants Management Specialists, GS-1160 Financial Analysts, GS-1410 Librarians, and GS-2210 Information Technology Specialists at the GS-11, GS-12, GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 grade levels within Region 7 in Kansas and Missouri. The IT Security 2201 position is excluded from the targeted population.

Regional Administrative Support Positions: We plan to offer VERA/VSIP to non-supervisory GS-0029 Environmental Protection Assistants and the GS-0301 Miscellaneous and Program series, GS-0318 Secretary(s), and GS-2005 Supply Technicians at the GS-6, GS-7, GS-8, GS-9, and GS-10 grade levels within Region 7 in Kansas.

Attachment 2, VERA/VSIP shows allocations by occupational series within Region 7.

5. Identify the number of VSIPs to be paid and the maximum amount of each VSIP (up to \$25,000).

Up to 70 VSIPs will be offered, each up to the maximum of \$25,000.

6. Describe how the organization will operate without the eliminated positions and functions identified in number 1.

In the environmental program positions (Series 0028, 0301, 0340, 0343, 0401, 0408, 0690, 0808, 0819, 1301, 1320, and 1340), Region 7 will reduce the number of higher graded positions

(GS-12 and above), especially non-supervisory, while consolidating the higher graded work in remaining positions. While a modest replacement plan (replace the number of positions under the 488 FTE ceiling) will be implemented, the goal is to achieve a more grade level balanced workforce with the skills needed to meet today and tomorrow's challenges.

In the attorney and paralegal positions (Series 0905, 0950) Region 7 will consolidate some management positions and through a modest re-hiring program backfill a smaller number of entry level positions, focusing on a skill set supporting multimedia approaches, greater use of technology in evidence gathering and communications, and more comprehensive settlements as opposed to individual rule violations.

In the regional programmatic positions (Series 0201, 0301, 0340, 0342, 0343, 0501, 0505, 0510, 1035, 1084, 1101, 1109, 1160, 1410, and 2210) Region 7 will reduce the number of higher graded positions (GS-11 and above), especially non-supervisory, while consolidating the higher graded work in remaining positions. While a modest replacement plan (replace the number of positions under the 488 FTE ceiling) will be implemented, the goal is to achieve a more grade level balanced workforce with the skills needed to meet today and tomorrow's challenges. The IT Security 2210 position is excluded from the targeted population.

In the regional administrative positions (Series 0029, 0301, 0318, 2005) Region 7 will reduce the overall number of positions, consolidating the higher graded work in remaining positions. While a modest replacement plan (replace the number of positions under the 488 FTE ceiling) will be implemented, the goal is to recognize the significant changes in technology that have caused decentralization of functions and a totally new way of doing administrative functions during the past decade.

7. Provide a proposed organization chart showing the expected changes to the organization's structure after completing the VSIP plan.

See attachment 1. The proposed VERA/VSIP plan will not result in changes to the Region 7 organization chart at this time. However, the overall number of Region 7 employees will be reduced to meet the skill set needed to meet today and tomorrow's challenges, while working within budgetary limitations. Depending on the number and organizational location of those who take the early out/buy out, some reorganization within the region may be necessary in the future.

8. If requesting, or will request, VERA, describe how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

Region 7 has a substantial number of employees eligible for optional retirement and an even higher number of VERA-eligible employees. However, given our low attrition rate and the fact that many of our optional retirement-eligible employees have continued to work years beyond retirement eligibility, we are requesting authority to offer VERA with VSIP to supplement our number in order to reach our goal of 70 voluntary separations.

Offering VERA with VSIP is more appealing than VERA alone and most likely will help us achieve the voluntary separations needed to restructure the grade levels of our workforce and gain the skill sets needed to meet current and future mission needs while avoiding the use of more drastic authorities.

9. If offering VSIPs under another statutory authority, describe how VSIPs are being used under that authority.

Not applicable.

Required information for VERA request

10. Provide the anticipated effective date of the substantial layering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping described in number 1.

Reshaping will occur after May 2, 2014.

11. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s).

U.S. EPA Region 7 employs 522 permanent employees (as of 12/1/13).

12. Provide the total number of permanent employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to be involuntarily separated, downgraded, transferred, or reassigned as a result of the reason(s) in number 1.

We expect to process at least 120 personnel actions (voluntary separations, reassignments, details, reclassifications, and internal/external recruitments) to implement the reshaping of our workforce, restructure the grade levels of our workforce and reduce the overall number of positions in the region to meet FY 2015 staffing levels.

13. Provide the total number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are eligible for voluntary early retirement. (Do not include employees eligible for optional retirement.)

128 Region 7 employees are eligible for VERA under the plan.

14. Provide an estimate of the number of employees in the agency or covered component(s) who are expected to take voluntary early retirement.

40 employees are estimated to take voluntary early retirement under the plan.

15. Describe the types of personnel actions anticipated as a result of the reason(s) in number 1 (e.g., reassignments, downgrades, separations) that would occur without VERA.

- Directed reassignments
- Details
- Voluntary separations
- Abolish and/or reclassify positions

While the above would occur, without VERA and VSIP authority, the region will not be able to meet FY2015 staff levels, nor accomplish restructure/ reshaping goals outlined in this request.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Current Organization Chart

**Attachment 2 – Targeted Positions and Maximum Number of VSIPs to be
Offered to Targeted Positions In All Occupational Series**

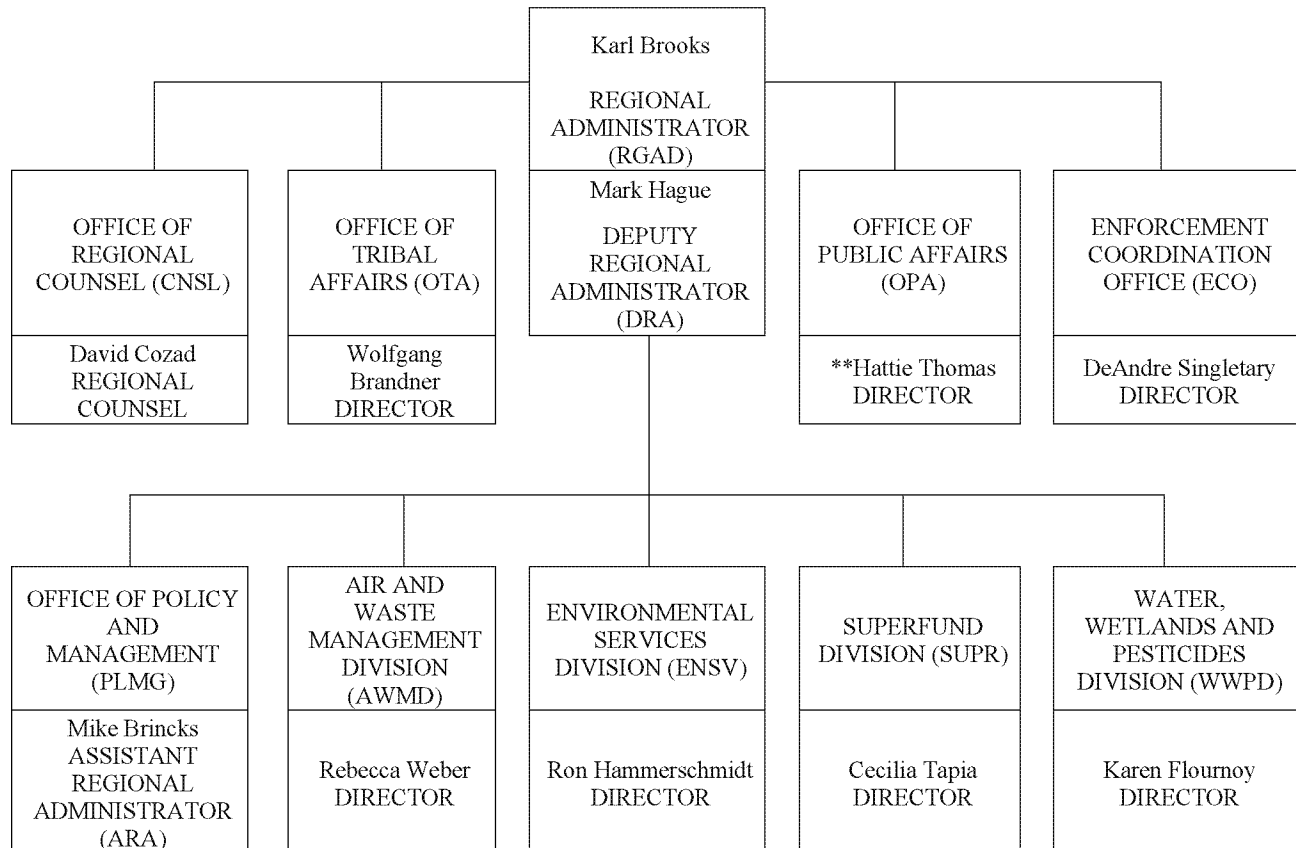
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Attachment 1 – Current Organization Chart

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

REGION 7 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

(* - Acting)



Attachment 2 – Summary of Targeted Positions by Series & Duty Station					
Occupational Series	Title	Targeted Duty Station(s)	*Total Onboard as of 12/1/2013	Regular Retirement Eligible	VERA Eligible
0028	Environmental Protection Specialists	KS	50	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy	Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
0029	Environmental Protection Technician	KS	1		
0201	Human Resources Specialist	KS	7		
0301	Miscellaneous/Program Series	KS, MO	10		
0318	Secretary	KS	26		
0340	Program Management Series	KS	7		
0342	Support Services Specialist	KS	2		
0343	Management and Program Analyst	KS, MO	26		
0401	Life Scientist	KS, NE	34		
0408	Ecologist	KS	4		
0501	Financial Management Specialist	KS	2		
0505	Financial Manager	KS	1		
0510	Accountant	KS	7		
0690	Industrial Hygienist	KS	2		
0808	Architect	KS	1		
0819	Environmental Engineers	KS, MO, IA	78		
0950	Paralegal Specialist	KS	4		
1035	Public Affairs Specialist	KS	11		
1084	Visual Information Specialist	KS	2		
1101	Small Business Specialist	KS	1		
1109	Grants Management Specialist	KS	10		
1160	Financial Analyst	KS	1		
1301	General Physical Science	KS, MO	128		
1320	Chemist	KS	15		
1340	Meteorologist	KS	1		
1410	Librarian	KS	1		
2005	Supply Technician	KS	2		
**0905	Attorney Advisors Max 12 Offers	KS, MO	41		
***2210	Information Technology Specialist Max 5 Offers	KS	12		
	Totals		487	98	128
Total Regular	Retirement eligible under plan			98	
	Total VERA eligible under plan				128
	Total VSIP eligible under plan		475		
	Total Offered		up to 70		

* All but 12 onboard (all series-- who do not meet the continuous service requirement) appear to be eligible for VSIP.

** Maximum offers identified in these series due to “hard to fill” occupational series and areas where limit needed due to workload in the job series.

***Maximum offers of 5 in this job series due to critical need of IT Security position. The IT Security position is excluded from the targeted population.



United States Geological Survey

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENT (VSIP)

VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT AUTHORITY (VERA)

REFERENCE GUIDE

**USGS Office of Human Resources
Strategic Initiatives Team
May 2011**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Purpose and Scope.....	3
Authority	3
Terms and Concepts	4
Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
Workforce Planning for Organizational Effectiveness	6
Agency Planning for VSIP/VERA.....	6
VSIP/VERA Approval Process	7
Preparing a VSIP/VERA Request.....	7
Implementing the VSIP/VERA Plan	10
General Eligibility for VSIP.....	11
General Eligibility for VERA.....	12
Reporting Requirements.....	13
Appendix A: VSIP/VERA Process Flowchart	14
Appendix B: Information Required in VSIP/VERA Requests	15
Part 1: Sample VSIP Request	16
Part 2: Attachment 1: Sample Spreadsheet	18
Part 3: Attachment 2: Current Organization Chart.....	21
Part 4: Attachment 3: Future Organization Chart	21
Part 5: Sample VERA Request.....	24
Part 6: Sample Cover Memorandum.....	24
Part 7: Sample Correspondence Brief	25
Appendix C: VSIP Requirements Template	26
Appendix D: VERA Requirements Template	28
Appendix E: Reporting Templates.....	29
Appendix F: Guided Inquiry Questions	31

Introduction

This Reference Guide provides a framework for understanding and applying Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP) Authority and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA). It was written to be used as a user-friendly tool for USGS supervisors and managers, support staff, and HR professionals in developing VSIP/VERA requests, implementing the authority after approval, and meeting Department of Interior (DOI) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reporting requirements.

Purpose and Scope

VSIP and VERA are tools to facilitate voluntary attrition in Federal agencies that are undergoing a substantial organizational change (e.g., downsizing, restructuring, or a potential reduction-in-force). Specifically, VSIP Authority allows Federal agencies to offer a lump-sum payment to employees who are in surplus positions or have skills that are no longer needed in the workforce, as an incentive to separate. VERA allows USGS to offer voluntary early retirement when restructuring as well as when downsizing to those employees who may be affected by a substantial organizational change as well as to those employees in ‘safe’ positions that could then provide placement opportunities for employees occupying surplus positions. Often, VSIP is offered along with VERA as an incentive to facilitate voluntary retirement among those who meet early retirement eligibility requirements.

Authority

Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP):

- 5 United States Code 3521 and 3525
- Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 576
- Section 1313(b), Chief Human Capital Officers Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296, approved November 25, 2002)

Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA):

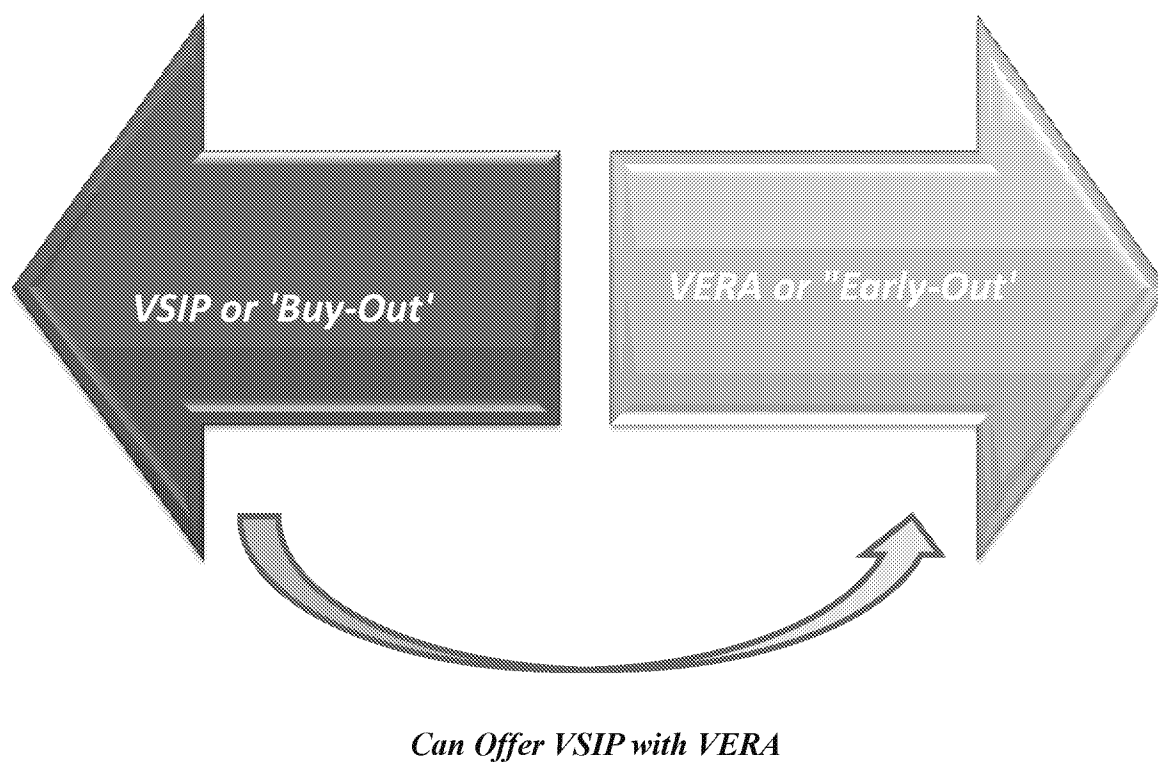
- 5 United States Code 8336(d)(2) and 5 CFR 831.114 covers statutory VERA provisions for employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)
- 5 United States Code 8414(b)(1)(B) and 5 CFR 842.213 covers statutory VERA provisions for employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)
- Section 1313(b), Chief Human
- Capital Officers Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296, approved November 25, 2002)

Terms and Concepts

Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP): VSIP (or ‘buy-out’) Authority allows Federal agencies to offer lump-sum payments to employees who are in surplus positions or have skills that are no longer needed in the workforce, as an incentive to separate. Under VSIP, agencies may pay up to \$25,000, or an amount equal to the amount of severance pay an employee would be entitled to receive, whichever is less. Employees may separate to accept VSIP by resignation, optional retirement, or by voluntary early retirement, if authorized.

Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA): VERA or “early out” provides Federal agencies the option to offer voluntary early retirement when restructuring or downsizing. It is used as an option to increase voluntary attrition in agencies that are undergoing significant organizational changes (e.g., reduction in force, reorganization, reshaping, delayering, etc.).

Figure 1. VSIP/VERA Connection



Roles and Responsibilities

VSIP/VERA – Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
USGS Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves VSIP and VERA authority requests from USGS offices and ensures USGS regulatory compliance of approved authorities
COHC Office Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advisory and high level consultation to USGS managers on workforce planning and flexibilities, including VSIP/VERA and ensures regulatory compliance of approved authorities
HR Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advisory consultation to USGS managers on workforce planning and flexibilities, including VSIP/VERA and ensures regulatory compliance of approved authorities
USGS Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts workforce analysis of USGS organization to determine viability of using VSIP/VERA, prepares VSIP/VERA packages for approval, and offers authority to eligible employees
Strategic Initiatives Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advisory consultation to USGS managers and supervisors on workforce planning and feasibility of using VSIP/VERA as a viable workforce flexibility and provides staff oversight for the program
HRO Workforce Flexibilities Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees execution and compliance of VSIP/VERA Program and works with supervisors/HR Specialists to facilitate program success
HRO HR Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides technical staffing, classification, and advisory services to supervisors and managers on operational human resources issues and answers questions from employees on VSIP and VERA**
HRO Benefits Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides retirement counseling and related services to employees considering early and optional retirement options
Office of Budget, Planning and Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains working relationships with OMB officials and provides advisory services on FTE utilization, budget and performance programs
Office of Communications and Publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides technical review of VSIP/VERA documentation and facilitates review/approval through Office of the Director staff
Office of the Director Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides review of VSIP/VERA documentation and facilitates review/approval from the Director, USGS
Department of Interior Office of Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews and approves USGS VSIP/VERA requests and works with OPM/OMB to facilitate approval/reporting process
Office of Personnel Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews and approves VSIP/VERA requests and monitors USGS compliance of authorities
Office of Management and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consults with OPM in the review/approval process of VSIP/VERA requests

****Appendix F includes guided inquiry questions to facilitate constructive VSIP/ VERA discussions.**

Workforce Planning for Organizational Effectiveness

Workforce planning is a major component of strategic human capital management, enabling organizations to link workforce requirements directly to the USGS's mission. It is also an essential tool for aligning budget allocations to human resources requirements so USGS organizations can meet their strategic objectives. Managers and supervisors who have completed workforce plans or organizational analyses, which address their organization's personnel and budgetary situation, skills set requirements, and workforce restructuring/reshaping alternatives are better positioned to move ahead with developing a request for VSIP/VERA. The data compiled in such plans can be used in developing the formal request for VSIP/VERA authority. In analyzing the viability of using specific workforce flexibilities such as VSIP and/or VERA, supervisors and managers should consider and specify how such authorities will assist USGS in reaching specific goals in human capital planning; e.g., offering VSIP may be more cost-effective and less disruptive than involuntary actions such as reduction-in-force (RIF). While VSIP and VERA are tools to help an organization respond to anticipated changes, it should be used with other workforce strategies such as employee training, voluntary attrition, directed reassignments, etc.

Agency Planning for Submitting a VSIP/VERA Request

Requests for VSIP/VERA authorities are reviewed and approved by the USGS Office of the Director, Department of Interior (DOI), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Because the review/approval process involves numerous internal and external stakeholders and substantial time (approximate 3 – 4 months, see *Appendix A –VSIP/VERA Process Flowchart*), agency supervisors and managers should begin planning for VSIP/VERA as early as possible in order to realize optimal cost savings by using these authorities. The Office of Human Resources (HRO) i.e., the Human Resources Specialist who provides staffing and classification services to the organization, and the Program Analyst on the Strategic Initiatives Team in the HRO provides technical and consulting services for organizations when they are considering using such workforce flexibilities and should be the first point of contact for supervisors who are contemplating the use of such authorities.

VSIP/VERA Approval Process

Management's Challenges to VSIP/VERA Request Development & Approval

Completing Preliminary
Workforce Analysis

Eliciting Advice/Consultation
from HR and Others at Earliest
Phases

Ensuring Data Consistency with
HR and Budget Office

Ensuring Consistency,
Completeness, and Accuracy of
VSIP/VERA Packages

Facilitating USGS Review from
Stakeholders in Timely Manner

Facilitating Prompt Approval
from Internal and External
Stakeholders

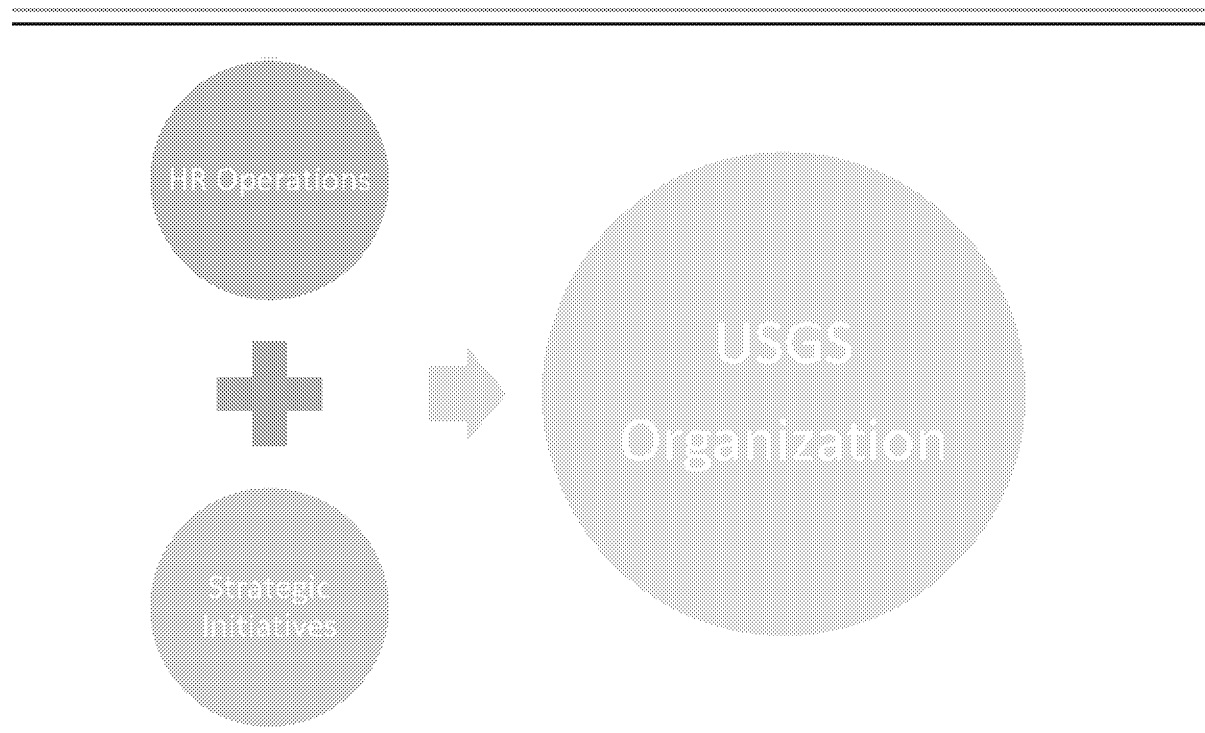
VSIP and VERA requests are reviewed by internal stakeholders from USGS (HRO, Office of Budget, Planning, and Integration, Office of the Director and approved by the Director, USGS) and by management officials from the DOI. OPM, in consultation with OMB, considers the costs and benefits associated with the authority and approves or denies the requests.

Preparing a VSIP/VERA Request

If VSIP and/or VERA are viable tools that an USGS organization wants to use to facilitate necessary organizational changes, it needs to allow sufficient time for developing and analyzing the data to support the request and in working with the HRO in preparing VSIP/VERA authority requests for approval. USGS will want to present a compelling argument to external stakeholders for approval based on mission requirements and the need for organizational restructuring due to changes in skill sets, etc. In addition, USGS managers and supervisors will want to work with the Office of Budget, Planning, and Integration as well as higher level management officials in their chain of command as early as possible to elicit approval and support for advocating the use of VSIP and/or VERA in their organizations. Preparing a VSIP/VERA authority request needs to be a collaborative effort involving key USGS stakeholders at the earlier stage in the

process. For detailed instructions on preparing a VSIP/VERA request, see ***Appendix B, Information Required in VSIP/VERA Requests.***

Figure 2: HR Consulting Role in VSIP/VERA Package Development



A reminder: USGS managers considering the use of VSIP and/or VERA should elicit the expertise of the Human Resources Specialist in the Operations HRO, as well as from the USGS Program Analyst assigned to HRO's Strategic Initiatives Team, as reflected in *Figure 2 above*. Shared human resources responsibilities by the two HR Offices are depicted in *Figure 3* on the next page.

Figure 3: HRO/SI Collaboration for VSIP/VERA Package



Implementing the VSIP and VERA Plan

After USGS receives authority from OPM to offer VSIP and/or VERA, management may offer VSIP to those individuals covered by the scope of the authority and within a window period for acceptance of VSIP/VERA applications. USGS management must notify its employees that it retains the right to limit the number of VSIP and/or VERA by use of a specific closing date or by receipt of a specific number of applications. USGS management may not offer VSIP/VERA to employees who are outside the scope of the authority approved by OPM or assign an effective date for a VSIP/VERA that is beyond the time period for paying a VSIP or offering VERA that was approved by OPM.

A VSIP is not an entitlement for an employee who is potentially eligible for a VSIP.

A VSIP and/or VERA is not an entitlement for an employee who is potentially eligible for a VSIP or VERA. When USGS limits the number of employees who are approved for VSIP/VERA, it must establish an impartial formal procedure to make these decisions before accepting applications and communicate this procedure to employees announcing the plan.

USGS should use the same procedure to determine which employees can separate under VERA, when VSIP is not offered. Standard selection procedures may include total creditable Federal civilian service, total creditable Federal civilian service in the agency or in the organizational component offering the VSIP/VERA, or first-in, first-out (e.g.,

USGS may limit the availability of VSIP based on:

- *One or more organizational unit(s)*
- *One or more occupational series or grade(s)*
 - *One or more geographic area*
- *Skill, knowledge, or other factors related to a position*
- *Specific time periods during which eligible employees may elect to accept a VSIP offer - or -*
 - *Any combination of the factors listed above.*

accepting the first application received, up to an established limit or date).

General Eligibility for VSIP

Eligibility Requirements for VSIP

Be serving under an appointment without time limitation

Be currently employed by the Executive Branch for at least 3 years

Be serving in a position covered by an Agency VSIP offer

Apply for and receive approval for a VSIP from an agency making the VSIP offer

Not included in any of the Ineligibility Requirements listed below

Ineligibility Requirements for VSIP

Employed Annuitants

Eligible for Disability Retirement

In Receipt of a Notice of Involuntary Separation for Misconduct or Unacceptable Performance

Previously Received any VSIP from the Federal Government

Other Circumstances involving Bonuses and Student Loans



Remember to treat USGS employees on military duty, leave without pay, workers' compensation, and detailed outside the agency as as though they were still in the job!

General Eligibility for VERA

- Meet the VERA minimum age and service requirement (i.e., at least 20 years of creditable service and is at least age 50, or has completed at least 25 years of creditable service regardless of age)
- Have been continuously employed by DOI for at least 31 days before the date DOI requested OPM approval of VERA
- Be serving under an appointment without time limitation
- Have not received a final removal decision based upon misconduct or unacceptable performance
- Be serving in a position covered by an Agency VERA offer

Reporting Requirements

USGS is required to provide DOI (which subsequently reports to OPM) with quarterly and final VSIP and VERA reports. An authority may be suspended or cancelled if USGS is not in compliance with the reporting requirements specified in OPM's approval letter.

Quarterly reports are due 30 days after the end of the quarter following the approval of the authority. The report should include data specific to the quarter that just closed as well as cumulative fiscal year data (as of the end of the quarter the report covers). At the beginning of a new fiscal year, the report should include data concerning VSIP and VERA in the new fiscal year only (i.e., there is no need to report cumulative data which covers multiple fiscal years).

Final reports are due 60 days following the closing date of the authority.

USGS should submit a completed report to DOI even if there is no activity during the quarter.

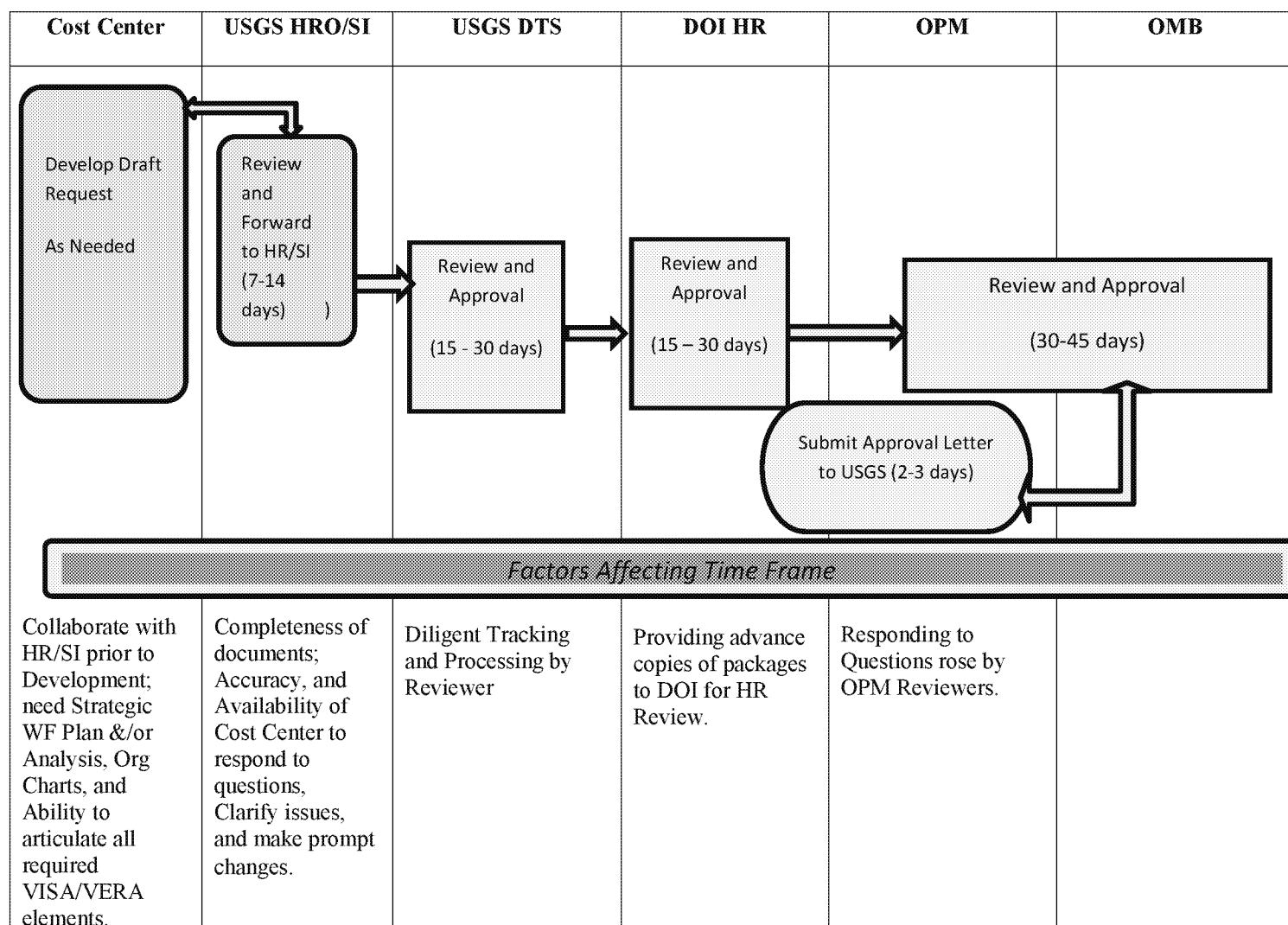
Each report must contain the information in the sample reporting format in Appendix E and the reporting format included in the authority.

Due Dates

Quarter	Quarter Ending Date	Report Due by:
First	December 31	January 30
Second	March 31	April 30
Third	June 30	July 30
Fourth	September 30	October 30
Final Report	(Due 60 days following the closing date of the authority)	

Mail Reports to:
Department of Interior
Office of Human Resources
Mail Stop 5230
1849 C. Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Fax: 202.219.1513

Appendix A: VSIP/VERA Process Flowchart



APPENDIX B: Information Required in VSIP/VERA Requests

While there are many similarities in both a VSIP and a VERA request, each must be a separate document and can stand alone on its own merit. These requests must answer questions required by law and presented below. *Appendices C* and *D* are requirements templates for VSIP and VERA requests and can be used as checklists for preparing these packages. A complete VSIP/VERA request must include seven parts, as provided below. Detailed instructions for completing the parts are provided in the following pages in this Reference Guide.

1. Part 1. Sample VSIP Request (Completed Form): See SAMPLE PART 1 XXXX VSIP Request
2. Part 2. Attachment 1: Specific Positions to be Reduced or Eliminated – See SAMPLE PART 2 ATT 1 XXXX Spreadsheet
3. Part 3. Attachment 2: Current Organization Chart
4. Part 4. Attachment 3: Proposed (Future) Organizational Chart
5. Part 5. Sample VERA Request (Completed Form): See SAMPLE PART 1 XXXX VERA Request
6. Part 6. Sample Cover (Correspondence) Memo
7. Part 7. Sample Correspondence Brief: See SAMPLE PART 7 XXXX Correspondence Brief

PART 1. XXXX VSIP Request

SAMPLE

Agency: Department of the Interior, US Geological Survey

Component(s): USGS XXXX, Denver, Colorado

Date of Request: September 29, XXXX

1. The reason for the voluntary separation incentive payment (VSIP) request.

[This introduction describes the circumstances for the request and explains why USGS believes that VSIPs will be an effective strategy for making the required adjustments in the workforce. Use same rationale for the VERA request, and a summary of this rationale in Parts 6 and 7 (Correspondence Memo and Correspondence Brief).]

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) requests approval to offer Voluntary Separation Incentives (VSIP) to certain employees within the XXXX Science Center in fiscal years (FY) 2010 and 2011. This request is based on the need to gain the functional and salary flexibilities required to facilitate the evolution of the XXXX workforce in moving to achieve the strategic objectives of the next three to five years.

The XXXX conducts research, interpretive investigations, mineral resource and environmental assessments, collects data and compiles databases, and manages complex equipment for chemical and isotopic analyses. Essential components of the Center's work include national and global mineral resource assessments and provision of mineral resource information and expertise to land and resource managers and policy makers.

The Center is vigorously pursuing strategic research and research-support directions that are in keeping with the recently established USGS science strategy, as articulated in USGS Circular 1309. This document states:

"...the USGS energy and minerals resource research will be broadened to contribute more comprehensively to discourse and decisions about future natural resource security, environmental impacts of resource use, the economic vitality of the Nation, and management of natural resources on U.S. Department of the Interior, Federal and other lands." A wide-ranging, multidisciplinary approach is used to understand and evaluate how the complex life cycle of occurrence, formation processes, extraction methods, use, and waste products of mineral resources influence, or are influenced by landscape, hydrology, climate, ecosystems, and human health.

In concert with this far-reaching vision for mineral and energy resources, the USGS science strategy calls for cross-cutting data integration, stating that "the USGS will use its information resources to create a more integrated and accessible environment for its vast resources of past and future data." These objectives require a sophisticated, highly-skilled staff with diverse information technology (IT) and data management skills sets for successful implementation of this spectrum of data management tasks and services.

The XXXX needs to hire new personnel with skills in interpretive investigation, the ability to do mineral and environmental assessments, expertise to run analytical equipment, and experience in administration. Facilitating the retirements of staff with limited skill sets and filling new positions at lower grades with persons with state-of-the-art skill sets will enable the USGS to better support project and center accomplishments.

During the past several years, the XXXX has reduced permanent staff numbers via normal attrition and only very selective backfilling of vacancies. Attrition alone will not yield the skill/staff transition that is needed to align with current and future projects. With VSIP approval, we will be able to ease our evolution to a more efficient organization that better meets USGS and XXXX strategic directions. We will create the salary flexibility to actively recruit to fill positions with needed state-of-the-art technical expertise. Without VSIP authority, the XXXX cannot hire new personnel and our remaining skill sets will not effectively match the needs of our future program.

2. Identification of the specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated, identified by organizational unit, geographic location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position, such as skills and knowledge.

Please see the attached spreadsheet (Att 1): Positions to be Reduced or Eliminated for XXXX Science Center

3. A description of the categories of employees who will be offered incentives.

We plan to offer VSIP to the following staff, all located in Denver, CO:

XXXX Science Center

List Positions (e.g., GS-0301-09 Administrative Specialist)

4. The time period during which incentives may be paid. *[USGS typically requests VSIP and VERA for a full fiscal year, but management should request authorities for as long as needed. If possible, offer buy-outs as early in the FY to recover the costs of the incentive payment and lump-sum leave payment to separating employees.]*

The time period we request to complete our VSIP program is upon approval to 9/30/XXXX.

We expect employees that accept VSIP to be off the rolls by 1/03/XXXX.

5. The number and maximum amount of voluntary separation incentive payments to be offered.

Ten (10) voluntary separation incentive payments of \$25,000 each will be offered for a total maximum cost of \$250,000.

6. A narrative description of how the organization will operate without the eliminated or restructured positions and functions.

As discussed in paragraph 1, the impetus for the VSIP request is the need for staff with state-of-the-art skills. The XXXX needs these new skills to more efficiently meet current and future strategic needs of the organization, and compile needed mineral deposit and environmental studies and assessments. As current employees retire, the USGS will hire new personnel at lower grade levels but with skills more relevant to our future tasks.

7. A proposed organization chart displaying the expected changes in the agency's organizational structure after the agency has completed the incentive payments.

Current and proposed organization charts are included as Attachments to this document.

Attachments 2 and 3: USGS XXXX Current and Future Organization Charts

8. If the agency has requested, or will request, voluntary early retirement authority (VERA), a description of how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

The VERA is also being requested to enable a larger number of selected positions to qualify for the VSIP offering than would otherwise be possible. The desired outcome to apply VERA and VSIP authorities together is to increase the number of employees eligible for separation to gain greater flexibility in the acquisition and development of new skills. Based on past VERA/VSIP offers, the USGS has received a higher rate of requests when the VERA authority is used along with VSIPs. The Bureau anticipates the same result in this instance by combining the two incentives.

9. If the agency is offering separation incentives under any other statutory authority, a description of how that authority is being used.

No separation incentive authorities other than VERA have been requested.

Citation

PART 2. ATTACHMENT 1: SAMPLE ATTACHMENT 1 XXXX SPREADSHEET:

Positions to be Reduced or Eliminated (Excel Spreadsheet)

[EMBED Excel.Sheet.8]

Part 2: Attachment 1, VSIP/VERA Spreadsheet

INSTRUCTIONS

Columns:

Work Station: Organizational Designation

Time Period: The time frame requested for the VSIP authority. The through date shown here should correspond with the through date you provide in Question 4 of the VSIP FORM and Question 2 of the VERA FORM. See the samples.

Of Permanent employees in agency component: The total number of permanent employees in the organization reflected in Column 1, Work Station. [This needs to correspond to the # of positions shown on your current organizational chart Attachment 2 (Part 3)].

Geographic Location: List the duty location(s) of the positions to be reduced or eliminated as requested in Question 2 of the VSIP Template. Ensure these are current and correct.

Position Title, Series, and Grade: List the specific positions to be reduced or eliminated. The information shown here should reflect information in response to Question 2 of the VSIP Template. Titling of positions must be consistent with official titles (see SF-50s) as well as how positions are titled on the organization chart.

Note: The terminology “positions to be reduced or eliminated” is interpreted as positions that are no longer necessary in their current structure. From a workforce planning perspective, if the incumbent of the position does not accept the VSIP offering, management must be able to assess the variety of options available to them to move the organization toward the strategic organizational goal described in the workforce plan. These options may include Reduction-In-Force, directed reassignments, realignment of work/restructuring positions, training, etc. The total number of positions identified in these columns should correspond with the number of VSIP offers to be shown in the column identified as Max Amounts to be Offered. (It should also correspond with the number provided in response to paragraph 5 of the VSIP FORM)

An organizational designation shown in the Work Station column may have positions located in multiple geographic locations at multiple grade levels that are to be offered VSIP. These may be combined for description purposes. In addition, positions that are designated as interdisciplinary (either a Geologist or Hydrologist could perform the work) may be reflected in that manner.

The listing of positions on the spreadsheet and in Question 2 of the VSIP Template is a subset of the total pool of positions identified in Question 3 of the VSIP Template to whom offers will be provided.

The positions identified in Question 3 of the VSIP Template represent the total pool of positions to which VSIP offers may be made and are the positions that, when offers are made, will provide the additional flexibility for restructuring if an incumbent in a Question 2 position does not accept the VSIP offer.

Positions identified in Question 3 of the VSIP Template should be described by organizational unit (consistent with column 2, Workstation, of this spreadsheet), title, series, grade, geographic location, and as needed, any other factor such as skills, knowledge or retirement eligibility.

Max Amounts to be Offered: This figure should reflect the maximum dollar amount available for all VSIP offering and should reflect the total dollar amount to be offered per VSIP up to a maximum of \$25,000. Agencies may offer less than the \$25,000 per VSIP. Therefore, the column information may read: \$100,000 – 4 Offers (\$25,000 each) or \$100,000 – 10 Offers (\$10,000 each). This should be the same as the information in paragraph 5 of your VSIP Request document.

Expected to Accept VSIP: This is management's best guess regarding the number of individuals who will accept VSIP offerings.

of Permanent Positions Expected to be Impacted by Workforce Restructuring: This number reflects the total number of permanent employees who are expected to be involuntarily separated, voluntarily separated, transferred, reassigned, reclassified, downgraded, and/or appointed as a result of the delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping upon which the VSIP/VERA request is based. This number should total the same number provided in #5 of the VERA Template and reflect management's best estimate of the positions impacted by the workforce restructuring process. For example, if the VERA request is based on a need to reshape your workforce to correct skills imbalances and the organization is likely to experience voluntary separations, reassignments, reclassifications and new appointments, the number should reflect the sum of these anticipated actions. This is a very different number from the numbers recorded or suggested in paragraph 2 (and Attachment 1 Spreadsheet) of the VSIP template.

Net budget impact of VSIP request and planned workforce action: This column should include an estimate of the net budget impact (whether savings and or higher costs) once VSIP and following human capital plan actions (attract new skills, use contract or term employees) have been achieved.

Performance measures impacted by VSIP and planned workforce action: This column includes performance measures impacted by VSIP and related human capital actions.

Actual change in performance: This column provides anticipated actual changes in performance levels.

Parts 3 and 4. Attachments 2 and 3: Current and Future Organization Charts

TIPS

Organization charts may be prepared using any software tool, i.e. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, VISIO, etc.

Organization charts reflect title, series and grade (no names) of positions. Identify positions that are interdisciplinary or may be filled at a range of grades such as: Geologist, GS-1350 or Geophysicist, GS-1313-12/15, as appropriate.

Future organization charts reflect the structure of the organization that is needed in the long-term (3-5 years).

Vacancies may be shown on the current (not future) organizational chart. Do not reflect temporary, term or contract positions. If such positions are an important part of your workforce plan, they can be addressed in the narrative parts of the request.

If an identifiable segment of your organization is not being included in your VSIP / VERA request, do not list the positions in that block. Mark such positions on the organizational chart as *No Change*. Individuals assigned to those positions may not later be offered a VSIP.

Ensure that organization charts are current, reflecting correct geographical location and position titles (see SF-50's) and correlate with Attachment 1: Specific Positions to be Reduced or Eliminated. The assumption is that there will be restructuring of positions. Organizations should not be offering VSIPs to incumbents and then backfilling the same positions at the same grade levels.

Part 5. VERA Request (Completed Form):

SAMPLE

Agency: Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey

Component(s): USGS XXXX Science Center, Denver, Colorado

Date of Request: September 29, XXXX

1. The reason for the VERA request. *[Use same rationale as used for paragraph 1 in the VSIP request.]*

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) requests approval to offer Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) to certain employees within the XXXX Science Center in fiscal years (FY) XXXX and XXXX. This request is based on the need to gain the functional and salary flexibilities required to facilitate the evolution of the XXXX workforce in moving to achieve the strategic objectives of the next three to five years.

The XXXX conducts research, interpretive investigations, mineral resource and environmental assessments, collects data and compiles databases, and manages complex equipment for chemical and isotopic analyses. Essential components of the Center's work include national and global mineral resource assessments, provision of mineral resource information, and expertise to land and resource managers and policy makers.

The Center is vigorously pursuing strategic research and research-support directions that are in keeping with the recently established USGS science strategy, as articulated in USGS Circular 1309. This document states: "...the USGS energy and minerals resource research will be broadened to contribute more comprehensively to discourse and decisions about future natural resource security, environmental impacts of resource use, the economic vitality of the Nation, and management of natural resources on U.S. Department of the Interior, Federal and other lands." A wide-ranging, multidisciplinary approach is used to understand and evaluate how the complex life cycle of occurrence, formation processes, extraction methods, use, and waste products of mineral resources influence, or are influenced by landscape, hydrology, climate, ecosystems, and human health.

In concert with this far-reaching vision for mineral and energy resources, the USGS science strategy calls for cross-cutting data integration, stating that "the USGS will use its information resources to create a more integrated and accessible environment for its vast resources of past and future data." These objectives require a sophisticated, highly-skilled staff with diverse information technology (IT) and data management skills sets for successful implementation of this spectrum of data management tasks and services.

The XXXX needs to hire new personnel with skills in interpretive investigations, the ability to do mineral and environmental assessments, expertise to run analytical equipment, and experience in administration. Facilitating the retirements of staff with limited skill sets and filling new positions at lower grades with persons with state-of-the-art skill sets will enable the USGS to better support project and Center accomplishments.

During the past several years, the XXXX has reduced permanent staff numbers via normal attrition and only very selective back-filling of vacancies. Attrition alone will not yield the skill/staff transition that is needed to align with current and future projects. With VERA approval, we will be able to ease our evolution to a more efficient organization that better meets USGS and XXXX strategic directions. We will create the salary flexibility to actively recruit to fill positions with needed state-of-the-art technical expertise. Without VERA authority, the XXXX will be less able to hire new personnel and our remaining skill sets will not effectively match the needs of our future program.

2. The time period for which VERA is requested. *[Use same language as used in the VSIP request.]*

The time period is upon approval through September 30, XXXX.

3. The date when the substantial de-layering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping upon which this request is based is scheduled to occur

The date is September 30, XXXX.

4. The total number of permanent employees in the organization

The number is 40.

5. The total number of permanent employees who are expected to be involuntarily separated, voluntarily separated, transferred, reassigned, reclassified, downgraded, and/or appointed as a result of number 3 above.

The number is 20.

6. The total number of permanent employees in the organization who are eligible for voluntary early retirement.

The number is 16.

7. The total number of permanent employees in the organization who are expected to take voluntary early retirement.

The number is 1.

8. A description of the types of personnel actions you expect to take as a result of the actions described in number 3.

The types of actions USGS expects to be taking include new appointments, reassignment, promotion, training, reclassification, and possibly involuntary separations. By combining a VERA with the VSIP, USGS expects that a somewhat larger number of employees will be able to leave the workforce by retirement than if only resignation and optional retirement with a VSIP were offered. In addition, USGS will be able to hire new employees and acquire and develop new skills in the workforce that are needed to successfully meet the challenges of providing cutting edge science support to USGS's partners.

Citation

U.S. Geological Survey, 2007, Facing tomorrow's challenges—U.S. Geological Survey science in the decade 2007–2017; U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1309, x + 70

Part 6: Sample Cover Memorandum

Memorandum

To: XXXX
Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget

Through: XXXX
Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

From: XXXX
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey

Subject: Request for Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) requests the authority to offer Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) to selected employees in the USGS XXXX Science Center (MRSC), Denver, Colorado. This authority is requested under the provisions of Section 1313 of the “Homeland Security Act of 2002” (Public Law 107-296) and the Office of Personnel Management interim regulations contained in 5 CFR Part 576 and Part 831.

The XXXX conducts research, interpretive investigations, mineral resource and environmental assessments, collects data and compiles databases, and manages complex equipment for chemical and isotopic analyses. Essential components of the Center’s work include national and global mineral resource assessments and provision of mineral resource information and expertise to land and resource managers and policy makers. A wide-ranging, multidisciplinary approach is used to understand and evaluate how the complex life cycle of occurrence, formation processes, extraction methods, use, and waste products of mineral resources influence, or are influenced by landscape, hydrology, climate, ecosystems, and human health.

In concert with this far-reaching vision for mineral and energy resources, the USGS science strategy calls for cross-cutting data integration, stating that “the USGS will use its information resources to create a more integrated and accessible environment for its vast resources of past and future data.” These objectives require a sophisticated, highly-skilled staff with diverse information technology and data management skill sets for successful implementation of this spectrum of data management tasks and services.

The XXXX needs to hire new personnel with skills in interpretive investigation, the ability to do mineral and environmental assessments, expertise to run analytical equipment, and experience in administration. Facilitating the retirements of staff with limited skill sets and filling new positions at lower grades with persons with state-of-the-art skill sets will enable us to better support project and Center accomplishments.

The USGS proposes to offer the VSIP and VERA authority during fiscal years 2010 and 2011 and effect all separations of qualified candidates no later than September 30, 2011.

We request your earliest review of and concurrence with the VSIP and VERA request and ask that you forward the request and documentation to the Office of Personnel Management for final approval. Questions concerning the request for the VSIP and VERA or the workforce planning study of the USGS should be forwarded to XXXXXXXX.

Attachments

Part 7: Sample Correspondence Brief

Subject:

Request for Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA).

Background:

A request for VSIP and VERA during fiscal years 2010 and 2011 has been prepared for employees in select positions within the Central Region, Central Region XXXX Science Center (XXXX), located in Denver, Colorado. The need to provide this buyout and early out opportunity is predicated on the strategic and workforce plans of the XXXX, and the need to develop and enhance science skills related to information technology and data integration management to support mineral resource studies. We anticipate that if all the positions identified for the VSIP and VERA are reconstituted and filled with persons with state of the art skill we will be significantly better able to support project and center accomplishments.

Summary of Correspondence:

This correspondence requests that the Director, Office of Personnel Policy at the Department of the Interior review, approve and forward the Request to the Office of Personnel Management for authority to offer VSIP and VERA to the selected USGS employees.

Correspondence has been coordinated with:

Reviewed and approved by:

XXXX, Chief, Office of Human Resources, XXXX

Date

Reviewed and approved by:

XXXX, Regional Executive, XXXX Area

Date

APPENDIX C: Template for VSIP Requests

This document provides a framework for submitting requests for authority to make voluntary separation incentive payments. Agencies should provide enough information under each item to justify use of the authority and to meet the requirements of part 576 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations and section 1313(a) of Public Law 107-296 (the Homeland Security Act of 2002).

Agency: _____ Component(s): _____

Date of Request: _____

1. The reason for the voluntary separation incentive payment (VSIP) request.

This introduction should describe the circumstances leading to the request and explain why the agency believes that VSIPs will be an appropriate strategy for making the required adjustments in the workforce.

2. Identification of the specific positions and functions to be reduced or eliminated, identified by organizational unit, geographic location, occupational category, grade level, and any other factors related to the position, such as skills and knowledge.

Geographic Location: **Organizational Unit:** **Series:** **Grade:** **Skills and Knowledge (Optional):**

3. A description of the categories of employees who will be offered incentives.

This should be a description of the group(s) of employees to whom you intend to offer VSIP. You should use categories such as position titles, occupational series, or function(s) performed (maintenance workers, support staff, etc.). Your category listing should include all groups of employees that will receive VSIP offers. It should also specify the geographic area(s) where the employees are located. **Do say** “We plan to offer VSIP to auditors and accounting technicians in Des Moines, IA, accounting technicians in Dallas, TX, and auditors, accounting technicians and payroll clerks in Orlando, FL”. **Don’t say** “We plan to offer VSIP to auditors, accounting technicians, and payroll clerks in Des Moines, IA, Dallas, TX, and Orlando, FL”. While the category listing should be general in nature, it should not be difficult to determine all of the categories of employees who will be offered VSIP, and the geographic location(s) where each category will be offered VSIP.

4. The time period during which incentives may be paid.

Your request should include a narrative of the time period during which VSIP will be offered and the date by which employees accepting VSIP should be off the rolls. What are the factors that might cause delays or complications? Why do you need the amount of time you have requested?

The time period we request to complete our VSIP program is _____.

We expect employees that accept VSIP to be off the rolls by_____.

We anticipate that we will require that amount of time because_____.

5. The number and maximum amount of voluntary separation incentive payments to be offered.

The number is_____. The maximum amount that will be paid is_____.

6. A narrative description of how the organization will operate without the eliminated or restructured positions and functions.

7. A proposed organization chart displaying the expected changes in the agency's organizational structure after the agency has completed the incentive payments.

This chart should show the agency (or component within the agency, if the VSIP request is for a single component) minus the eliminated or restructured/rewritten positions (different grade, title, function(s), etc.) In order to effectively show the meaning of this information, it would be useful to display a current organization chart as well.

8. If the agency has requested, or will request, voluntary early retirement authority (VERA), a description of how that authority will be used in conjunction with VSIP.

This discussion should explain the extent to which the agency believes it will reach its voluntary separation goals by combining VERA with VSIP as an enticement for voluntary separation. If the agency believes that VERA, when used with VSIP, may entice certain employees to retire early to receive a VSIP, it should provide that information and explain the anticipated, positive effect that VERA will have on the VSIP acceptance rate.

9. If the agency is offering separation incentives under any other statutory authority, a description of how that authority is being used.

This item is for agencies that may still have a single agency VSIP law. If that is the case, the agency should discuss the number of incentives it plans to offer under each VSIP authority, broken down as described in item two above. If the agency has no single agency VSIP law, it should enter "not applicable." in response to this item.

APPENDIX D: Template for VERA Requests

This document provides a framework for submitting requests for voluntary early retirement authority (VERA). Agencies should provide enough information under each item to justify use of the authority according to the requirements of the interim VERA regulations published June 13, 2003 (sections 831.114 and 842.213 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations).

Agency: _____ Component(s): _____

Date of Request: _____

1. The reason for the VERA request.

This should describe the circumstances leading to the request and explain why the agency believes that VERA will be an appropriate strategy for making the required adjustments in the workforce.

2. The time period for which VERA is requested.

The time period is _____.

3. The date when the substantial delayering, reorganization, reduction in force, transfer of function, or other workforce restructuring or reshaping upon which this request is based is scheduled to occur.

(Note: The date provided should not be earlier than the ending date provided in number 2 above.)

The date is _____.

4. The total number of permanent employees in the organization. (If you are requesting VERA for only a part of your organization, provide the data for that portion of the organization only. Do not provide the number of permanent employees for the entire organization.)

The number is _____.

5. The total number of permanent employees who are expected to be involuntarily separated, voluntarily separated, transferred, reassigned, reclassified, downgraded, and/or appointed as a result of number 3 above. (If you are requesting VERA for only a part of your organization, provide the data for that portion of the organization only. Do not provide this number for the entire organization.)

[For example, if you are requesting VERA based on a need to reshape your workforce to correct skills imbalances, you will likely experience voluntary separations, reassignments, reclassifications, and new appointments. The sum of these anticipated actions is the number we're seeking.]

The number is _____.

6. The total number of permanent employees in the organization who are eligible for voluntary early retirement. (If you are requesting VERA for only a part of your organization, provide the data for that portion of the organization only. Do not provide the number for the entire organization. Also, for this purpose, you should exclude all employees who are eligible for optional retirement.)

The number is _____.

7. The total number of permanent employees in the organization who are expected to take voluntary early retirement. (If you are requesting VERA for only a part of your organization, provide the data for that portion of the organization only. Do not provide the number for the entire organization.)

The number is _____.

8. A description of the types of personnel actions you expect to take as a result of the actions described in number 3.

This information need not be comprehensive. It should, however, be detailed enough to show how VERA will assist you in accomplishing your restructuring, reshaping, and/or downsizing plans—and the personnel actions you expect to take in concert with VERA to accomplish your goals.

APPENDIX E: Reporting Templates

USE OF VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENT (VSIP) AUTHORITY

Department or Agency: _____

Components: _____

VSIP Authority Number: _____

Date of Report: _____ QUARTER 1st 2nd 3rd 4th (Circle Quarter)

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

	QTR TOTAL	FY TOTAL
1. Total number of VSIPs available	_____	_____
2. Total number of employees offered VSIPs	_____	_____
3. Total Number of employees who accepted VSIPs and separated by:		
(a) Optional Retirement	_____	_____
(b) Voluntary Early Retirement	_____	_____
(c) Resignation	_____	_____
4. VSIPs paid during the quarter:		

Geographic Location	Organizational Unit	Occ. Series	Grade Level	# of VSIPs
Total Number of VSIPs Paid				

5. Additional questions:

- (a) How has this VSIP impacted the shape of your workforce?
- (b) Did the VSIP have the desired results? Why or why not?
- (c) What is the average cost of VSIPs paid during the quarter?

USE OF VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT AUTHORITY (VERA)

Department or Agency: _____

Bureau: _____

Component(s): _____

VERA Authority Number: _____

Date of Report: _____ QUARTER 1st 2nd 3rd 4th (circle quarter)

VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENTS

QTR TOTAL FY TOTAL

1. Number of eligible employees who received a VERA offer under this authority:

VERA offer with a VSIP _____
VERA offer without a VSIP _____

2. Early retirements data:

Retired early with a VSIP _____
Retired early without a VSIP _____
Average age _____
Average grade _____

3. Was reduction in force (RIF) used?

_____ NO (go to #5) _____ YES (complete 4 & 5)

4. Number of employees affected by reduction in force (RIF):

Total RIF separations _____
Total RIF downgrades _____
Total RIF reassignments _____

5. Other non-RIF attrition during the VERA window:

Retirements _____
Resignations _____
Transfers _____
Other separations _____
Total separations in (a)-(d) _____

6. Additional questions:

How has this VERA impacted the shape of your workforce?
Did the VERA have the desired results? Why or why not?

APPENDIX F: Guided Inquiry Questions

The purpose of these guided inquiry questions is to facilitate a productive VSIP/ VERA discussion between the Human Resource Specialists and managers. Please use this document as a guide; it is not necessary to answer all of the questions below.

Why are you considering a VSIP/VERA?

Have you used a VSIP/VERA before?

Did you obtain the desired results? Why or why not?

What has changed?

What other options have you used? Have you considered using a temporary work force?

Do you understand the time, effort and requirements needed to obtain approval for a VSIP/VERA?

Have you determined the actual budgets savings a VSIP/VERA would give you?

Are you considering a VSIP/VERA strictly because of budget limitations?

Do you believe employees will utilize either authority, and if so why?

Have you considered the workload impact without the eliminated or restructured positions ?

How will a VSIP/VERA help your workforce plan or human capital goals?

Do you have any skill imbalances or surpluses?

How much of your workforce is retirement eligible?

Is this center-wide or only for specific locations?

What position management issues are you dealing with?